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# CURRENTS

*A QUARTERLY REVIEW  
to explore the implications  
of Christianity for our times*

**MOUNIER • RICOEUR • GÖRRES • HEER**  
**MARROU • CHENU • COX • BANNAN**

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# FAITH AND THE CRITICAL MENTALITY

## *An introduction of Volume XI*

FOR ten years now, we have asserted it on the front cover of every issue: Cross Currents is committed to exploration. By now it may have become nothing but a catch-phrase, or be thought of as a somehow negative attitude, whereas what we wish to suggest is a humility before the richness, complexity and dynamism of reality. We have insisted that the object of our concern—the implications of Christianity for our times—elicits this posture of critical inquiry; the beginning of a second decade of publishing seems a good time to return to the argument.

### *Faith, Time, and Exploration: Some Essentials*

Christianity elevates time by revealing its movement. God has sought out man, entered his spirit, and committed His Incarnation to a process of fulfillment in history. His presence in the human spirit is our faith, deepening and extending our vision; our hope, grounding and amplifying our expectation; and our love, strengthening our determination that our neighbor shall flourish. This total activity is the life of faith, lived individually and collectively by the entire Christian community. Out of its movement through time come the attitudes, institutions and formulas which should—but do not consistently—maintain this Presence in each era.

Not to see the possibilities of incarnation in the distinctive features of time is to fail this obligation. Refuge may be sought in a golden past or a golden future, but in either case God's Presence is volatilized in a yearning that is not hope. This is the Nietzschean moment

of God's death. When, however, we accept the forms of a particular period as definitive and insist blindly on their preservation, we promote a misincarnation, constricting this Presence, and caricaturing it.

We must constantly take care that passionate attachment to a particular human accomplishment should not gain the upper hand on faith. For Christianity, genuine stability lies in its spiritual freedom, and any quest for misplaced permanence must be countered with the promotion of authentic self-possession. Similarly, meaningful progress for Christianity must rest on a keenness of sensitivity to the human condition, and every tendency toward fantasy must be rejected for a passionate taste for the capabilities incarnate in man. The present, we must remember, is not simply a product of the past, nor is it merely scaffolding to be abandoned in the interest of the future. It is a source of meaning. It is the most intense point of our presence to others and to the world. It is the decisive possibility of incarnating God's Presence.

It is in this context that the critical and exploratory address has its role and justification. One of the modes of this presence, it must see the promise of every era without ever abandoning the question mark which it raises over our response. We would not pretend that the critical mentality will be immune to the temptations just described, but the question mark will remain a call to immediate responsibility.

### *Faith, Time, and Exploration—1961*

*The Time and its features—Russia and the U. S. engage in the constant maneuvering which is their co-existence, and other nations rush to enter "the*

atomic club." The East-West struggle spills into a tortured Congo, and the so-called "underdeveloped countries"—including a rapidly-evolving Latin America—watch the contrasting experiments of China and India. Two-thirds of the world's people go hungry as American politicians solicit the "farm vote," and the public is deluged with contradictory releases on the "population explosion." Science offers shorter working hours and longer life, and more symposia are conducted on the implications of automation, leisure in a capitalist society, and the new science of gerontology. There is talk of "new frontiers," but the Committee on Un-American Activities continues to offer its brand of emotional security, remaining curiously undisturbed by any possible equation between racism and national orthodoxy, whether in New Orleans or Deerfield, Ill.

Our isolation of details is somewhat haphazard, but any significant inventory of characteristics emerging from this scene should include these four features:

*its incompleteness*—The entire picture cries out to tell us of all that is left to be done in a world once held to be stable and achieved. New techniques have opened up new possibilities, inviting neither a complacent belief in progress nor an excessive fascination with the abyss opening up in the eventuality of failure. Everything seems to invite a mentality which is able to look freshly at our problems, youth becomes an asset, and the future is weighted more heavily than ever.

*the human tone of its crisis*—What is to be accomplished is primarily moral and psychological. Our problems are political, social, economic and religious: which is to say that they are human. In one case we are dealing with human rights, the movement of people to free

themselves from various forms of imperialism; in another, we are hurrying to make human habitations of our expanding and sprawling communities; in another, we need to remind those campaigning for economic growth of the priority of equitable distribution in terms of fundamental human needs. Nor will the widespread religious vacuum be filled by *a priori* demonstrations by professional experts speaking to each other; the preacher, though man of God, must, like the biblical message he proclaims, speak also a human word. Even our instinctive appeal to science has taken on something of this coloration: no one doubts science's ability to establish and refine apparatus for managing matter, but all must share a concern with the efficacy of its address to man.

*the generalized consciousness of the crisis*—The first psychological condition of moral response must be our admission of an awareness of the situation. Our emotional states speak more clearly than statistics on the number of TV sets. Are not all of us alternately angry and fearful, at times proud, but more often embarrassed, by U-2 incidents, rebellion in Algeria and Cuba, Negro "sit-ins," and the myriad evidences of the delinquency which accompany our "high standard of living"? We prefer to lecture our students on complacency and conformism, and are vaguely troubled when the quiet interior passion for personal integrity suddenly bursts into action.

We cannot escape, we are face to face with our fellow man in his stress. Whatever our education or our sources of information, we cannot plead total ignorance, though we can turn our backs. It might be good to keep in mind, however, that partly as a result of modern communications, those upon whose trials we look know themselves as looked

upon. This adds another dimension to our situation: we not only appraise but stand appraised, the object of judgments which we cannot command. To know this is to have had a taste of the freedom of other men—and perhaps a foretaste of final judgment.

*the urgency and community nature of the decisions*—We have already spoken of the weighting of the future which marks our sense of time. If, in the interest of precision, we ask *what future*, and *whose?*, the answer which comes back is: the *immediate* future, and *everyone's*. The possibility of total disaster has a recapitulating effect which tends to force the future back into the present and to spread the life of humanity out before us in a decisive *now*. The call to creativeness is unmistakable and its implications universal. Not only do we face each other in our trials, the trials fuse to become a single threat.

#### *Faith and Exploration—Now*

Opportunity is alive in this scene. The general deepening and diffusion of consciousness with its heightened sensitivity of man to man; the vivifying of the human creative impulse by the call to accomplishment: this is spiritual development of the most authentic type. It is the refining and activating of that dimension of creation in which God chooses to dwell. From a crucial point of view, then, susceptibility to God has increased so that more men than ever are in a position to respond freely in striving to unite their wills with Him and their fellow men. But no refinement relieves created spirit of its fundamental ambiguity; no call to accomplishment guarantees the direction of its response. The emphasis on human creativity courts the obvious temptation to deify man.

Father Chenu (in the dialogue with Friedrich Heer included in this issue)

is optimistic: the desacralization of so much by the presence of human power is an excellent occasion for ridding ourselves of false gods. But with the refinement of consciousness comes the increased ability to replace ignorance as a refuge from responsibility with far more subtle devices whose purpose is the *refusal* to see. Heer is unequivocal in his assertion of our failure to take up the sufferings of other men, and brutal in his demand that we emerge from what is for many a state of "permanent puberty" in the life of faith. Mounier's article pointedly invokes the emasculated Christian of Nietzsche in his attempt to rouse us from that religiosity that we put on each morning as automatically as we reach for our socks. We must ask, then, where is the center of gravity of that generalized concern over the trials of the great mass of mankind to which we pointed above? Are our present fears and embarrassments the result of our assumption of some of the weight of their cross? Or are they forms of apprehension lest some of that weight come to fall on us?

Under the circumstances, we must look to the possibilities of growth in the life of faith. Ida Friederike Görres displays them in her account of the spiritual trials of Reinhold Schneider; and the progress from childhood to adolescence and then to adult stages of faith, which are manifest in the case of the individual believer, is analogously open to the Christian community at large. Our faith will be adult when it recognizes the spirit's own invitation to make the cross of our brothers strictly an *indirect* concern, and when it refuses the devices available for accomplishing this blindness. This is the point, of course, where faith invites—let us be blunt and say *demands*—a critical and exploratory mentality. Its role is to hold before us the fact that Christianity's

resources and possibilities are always greater than the life of faith which we are leading. It will remind us, for example, that the immediate future must accommodate not only a well-behaved India and a boisterous Central Africa, but a South America with grievances and a China with more than a quarter of the world's humans. It will insist that we acknowledge that a psychology, morality or politics absorbed with its own self-survival is hopelessly inadequate, and will take up the task of finding, as Heer suggests, new ways of saying *yes* and *no*.

And it will look to its own house. Exploration and criticism appear to be less contested in America as appropriate Christian behaviors than they were even ten years ago. The novelty is wearing off, and its exhilarating tensions are relaxing. The endeavor is caught up in a high rate of obsolescence of ideas which imposes familiarity too soon. Familiarity aggravates every temptation, for it does not simply rob one of the delicious feeling of being misunder-

stood: it threatens sharpness of vision, and the readiness of the scene to resolve itself into the patterns which reveal it decisively. And *this* long before the problems which originally evoked the mentality have been effectively dealt with. Shall we increase pitch and volume? Perhaps we should attempt to renew the novelty by a sweeping revision of vocabulary. But although we must all take care not to use words like *dialogue*, *presence*, *witness*, as mere counters, a new vocabulary in itself is only another type of volatilization. Novelty is a questionable source of productive tension at best, and at less than best it is simply distracting. Let us profit by this rate of obsolescence and be glad that novelty is behind us. Then we can notice that beyond every vocabulary, formula, institution and mentality lies the reality which it tries to possess.

Here is where the real tension lies: in the conditions separating men from their own authentic reality as fully developed images of God. Our grasp of this is faith; our assumption of it—love.

JOHN F. BANNAN

# IS THE MODERN WORLD ATHEIST?

A discussion-interview on The Contemporary Mind

M. D. CHENU and FRIEDRICH HEER

The interview which we publish here first appeared in the Jan. 1, 1960 number of the indispensable fortnightly, *INFORMATION CATHOLIQUE INTERNATIONALES* (163, blvd. Malesherbes, Paris 17e, 29 N.F. a year), an all-but-unique example of the combination of modern newspaper techniques and the needs of reliable documentation, all in the service of a truly adult and irenic conception of Catholic journalism.

This interview was presented by I.C.I. as a continuation of those published Jan. 1, 1957 (a quick world-survey by Fr. Lebreton, which emphasized the awakening of new nations, and the tremendous disparity in living standards between the rich—the U.S., Canada, western Europe—and the poor—India, Peru, Ghana, etc.) and Jan. 1 1958 (a discussion by Fr. Dubarle of the ways in which science and technology were revolutionizing not only nature, but man himself—reprinted in condensed form in *CROSS CURRENTS*, Fall 1958). The full texts of these two interviews are available in a brochure ("Sommes-nous en révolution") at the address listed above (3 N.F.).

Father Chenu was rector of the Dominican house of studies at Saulchoir for ten years, and lectured on the history of religious thought in the 12th & 13th centuries at the *Ecoles des Hautes Etudes*. He is the author of *LA THÉOLOGIE AU XIIIÈ SIÈCLE* (Vrin), and *IS THEOLOGY A SCIENCE?* (Hawthorne). *CROSS CURRENTS* has published "The Plan of the Summa" (Winter 1952), "Towards a Theology of Work" (Spring 1957), and "Truth and Freedom in the Faith of the Believer" (Summer 1959).

Friedrich Heer has taught the course

in western spiritual history at the University of Vienna, and was editor of the important Viennese weekly, *DIE FÜRCHEN*. He has published books on the tragedy of the Holy Empire, and on national and universal aspects of European Catholicism. His essays in *CROSS CURRENTS* include "The Priest-workers in France" (Spring 1954), "The Saint of a New Era" (on Thérèse of Lisieux, Fall 1955), and "The Rebirth of Catholic Obedience" (Spring 1956).

By inclination and because of their intellectual discipline, both Fr. Chenu and Dr. Heer look at the world and the Church in the world as historians: they have the same method, the same technique, the same approach. Each in his own way has been led to attempt a theological reading of history.

Before being an organic ensemble of principles, doctrines, and morals, Christianity, for the historian, is a series of "facts," whose human-divine density is full of "ideas." The major fact, which dominates all others, before and after, is the fact of the Incarnation: God has become man; He is a personage of history.

Such a perspective implies a doctrinal choice, both for the historian and the believer: the Church, mystical body of Christ on earth, is "in" the world and cannot be defined without an interior reference to this world. It is not by accident that the Church is in history, that she has a history; she is sacred history, like the Bible, even more completely than the Bible.

This option separates us from a monophysite conception of the Church as well as from a monophysite conception of the Incarnation. The Christian, realizing he



is a member of the human community, is responsive to the fact of the Word "made flesh," to the humanization of God. The historian is glad to associate this emphasis with that of the great eastern Fathers of the Church, who gave special emphasis to the duality of natures in Christ, and to the reality of his human nature. This perspective enables us to understand better, in faith, the earthly relativities of the Church, as against those who, in a summary integralism, rush towards the theocratic absolutism of the monophysites.

### For or Against God

*Is there, in your opinion, any one way of characterizing the contemporary mind?*

FRIEDRICH HEER—Yes, by the term "pluralism," since there are in fact a great many "contemporary minds," some complementary, some contradictory. Indeed there is, analogously, a pluralism of Christian and even Catholic minds: French Catholics (of the Right, of the Left, etc.), Irish, Spanish, South American, German, Italian, Polish, Chinese, African Catholics—and to an even greater extent is this true of the various religious orders and congregations with their distinctive spiritual orientations: Manichean, Jansenist, Dominican, Franciscan, Salesian, Jesuit, etc. And all of these groups have contributed to the formation of quite different mentalities and world views. It must be pointed out, however, that there is in this very pluralism a potential weakness (especially on the level of missionary activity, as in Japan) as well as a source of strength. It is impossible for the Church, being the great living organism that it is, to do too much in the way of differentiating its responses to the various demands of the contemporary mind.

*Does the contemporary mind seem to you to be the result of sociological*

*conditioning or of certain currents of reflective thought?*

FATHER CHENU.—Without in any way pre-judging the question of great minds—whose genius is not to be explained by environment or historical context—it is obvious that all sorts of anonymous pressures, ideologies and secular mystiques exert a tremendous influence, of which our elders were unaware. Any analysis of the contemporary situation must, consequently, take into account not only the flowering of the individual thinker's genius, but also those pre- or para-philosophical currents whose bearing on truth or error it would be a mistake to underestimate.

### The Sense of History

Let us, for example, look for a moment at the remarkable prestige of Teilhard de Chardin. His books have proved to be an astonishing commercial success; *The Phenomenon of Man* has, at this writing, sold 80,000 copies. I suppose that there are really no more than about five thousand people who are really capable of reading this book, and yet I have frequently had the experience at gatherings—including workers' meetings—of hearing Teilhard discussed with great familiarity, as though to do so were the simplest and most natural thing in the world. We must conclude that Teilhard has provided a scientific foundation for an idea which responds to rather widespread needs and yearnings.

We seem to have here the first characteristic of a common attitude which has touched and impregnated minds which are quite outside areas of philosophical reflection: it is the feeling that the world is stirring, that humanity is on the march. I am not referring only to a superficial awareness of contemporary phenomena such as the ease of mobility, the rapidity of commercial exchange, the whirlwind of facts, events and ideas

which so often threatens to overwhelm us, or the radical transformations of industrial and rural life. Something more profound is involved in the sensational discoveries of science, the intricacies of contemporary technology, and the overthrow of old forms which are bringing about a mutation of the human condition, a mutation which is psychological, spiritual and even religious.

We are no longer dealing merely with that notion of progress associated with a Condillac and an Enlightenment, which developed and had its full flowering in the bourgeois liberalism of the nineteenth century. What we are dealing with today is rather a "sense of history" which has saturated the very tissues of the people themselves. This new awareness, this contemporary sense of history can, it is true, be indicted on the grounds of its ambiguousness, which is in turn the result of a sort of vague evolutionism. When, however, certain qualifications or distinctions have been made, this sense of history does lead to a vision of the world which succeeds in fusing both rational and mystical values. Above all, this new awareness is giving rise to a movement of economic and political "liberation," to an immense hope, which is often exploited by Marxism, but which is, nevertheless, inherently healthy and good.

*Does this awareness to which you refer lead the ordinary man into philosophical and metaphysical investigations? Does it induce him to ask questions about the destiny of man?*

CHENU.— Perhaps, but not in any immediate sense. There does exist a vague feeling of a kind of cosmic predestination, but, it seems to me, it still remains indistinct among the people as a whole. It would certainly seem to be related to the awakening and nourishing of a religious sensibility, but it remains,

nevertheless, a nebulous mystique of the future, a vague aspiration to happiness which is not concerned with going beyond man's limitations.

*You referred to hope. Don't you think that fear is also a mark of the contemporary mind?*

### The Mastery of Matter

CHENU.— Yes, fear has gripped the Western mind, a fear which, like all fears, has paralyzed the West's faculty for discovery in a world given over to permanent discovery. The West is suffering from an inferiority complex with respect to those new peoples who, themselves deprived of power, nonetheless have hope, in the same way that the poor always have hope. This fear and this hope have the same motif: man's domination of matter—the matter of cosmos which he is penetrating with mind, as well as the very matter of his own flesh, whose spiritual implications he is beginning to sense in his discovery of new depths within the person. In short, man is discovering himself as a being of nature at the very moment when, in his pursuit of freedom, he is deepening his perception of himself as a person.

What are commonly referred to as the social sciences will henceforth integrate and interiorize the values of matter, as against the "spiritualism" of the nineteenth century. Scientific and technological breakthroughs, for example, have teamed up with an economy of need in order to come to terms with the hunger of the world.

You yourself, Friedrich Heer, once pointed out that right at the high point of Medieval Christendom there emerged a synthesis involving both the lucidity of the discursive faculty and the renewed perception of the role of matter. The result of this admirable and complex synthesis was a new theology of creation. It was in this way that St. Thomas Aquinas

nas introduced the pagan Aristotle into Christianity.

### The Collectivization of Man

In addition to this sense of history and the integration of matter, I should like to suggest finally a third common denominator underlying the modes of contemporary thought. Man has entered a stage of civilization in which his individuality is totally caught up, body and soul, in a general collectivization—of economies, of trade, of political organizations. We must today, no less than previously, be on our guard against those forces which would enslave the masses and produce a race of robots. We must, however, never forget that it is only through the achieving of self-awareness by the *community as a whole* that the *person* will be enabled to develop those resources so vital to his development and freedom. The revolution of the twentieth century has ruthlessly renounced the illusions and the hoaxes of 1789.

The socialist governments have, in a somewhat doctrinaire manner, taken advantage of this revolution; they have annexed a truth which has always stood at the center of Christian thought, *viz.*, that man is by nature a social being.

HEER.—My analysis of the conditions of the contemporary mind is similar to that of Father Chenu's, but I am perhaps somewhat less optimistic.

As far as I am concerned the dominant reality of our time is clearly the great industrialized and managerial society which, scattered throughout the world from the United States to Europe to the Soviet Union, has certain common characteristics: it is a society administered and directed by a relatively small number of top echelon managers who, with their assistants, actually control millions of dependent workers. This society is giving rise to a widespread feeling, in the East as well as the West, that the

individual is able only with great difficulty to escape the pressure of the administrators.

Of course a certain intoxication, an enthusiasm, is evoked by the tremendous possibilities of technology's putting an end to the hunger of a billion and a half human beings. But we know the price of such a victory: a dictatorship indulging in grandiose schemes and subjugating men by the millions. The development of semi-dictatorships, often masked and quite different in the forms they assume—in Europe, in Africa, in South America—is the price we have already paid for this progress.

A world of managers then is the world in which we live and think.

None of the world religions, moreover, including Christianity, has as yet discovered any vital new forms adequate to the task of adjusting to or opposing this new world. These world religions are in fact in a state of crisis. The happiest adjustment, relatively speaking—but also the most controversial—is that achieved by the three great confessions (Catholic, Protestant and Jewish) in the United States to "the American way of life," and to the forms of democracy.

Ours is a world which has seen the steady retreat of sickness, of suffering, of death. The crisis for the great religions in their brutal encounter with technology has been a crisis of growth. It can also be viewed, however, as a crisis of sickness, leading to death and disappearance. In all probability it is a crisis of both growth and of death: "Unless the seed fall into the ground and die. . ."

One fact stands out: in the closed technological, industrial society, God and religion apparently no longer fulfill any vital function. They no longer serve as anything more than a sanctuary or refuge for sentiment. The God of the ancient peasants, warriors, knights, merchants (on their dangerous journeys) and mariners assumed very concrete

functions: protection on the road of life, the fertility of the fields, the curing of diseases, the expelling of evil spirits, etc. These functions have now been assumed by society, through those institutions whose task it is to assure our well being. It is only where society has allowed certain gaps to persist that we find any kind of intellectual stirring or world view.

*Is it possible to isolate and to characterize those currents of thought which, taken together, make up what we call the contemporary mind?*

CHENU.— It would, I feel, be a serious mistake to attribute to this or to that system those common denominators of the contemporary mind about which we have been speaking: the sense of history, the mastery of matter, the collectivization of human realities—and then either to reject or approve them as so many products of these systems. Before they are the mere ingredients of some system of thought, they are first of all the expression of mankind's historical evolution.

### Marxism, Existentialism, Personalism

A choice between two great orientations is still to be made. On the one hand, Marxism has been able to appropriate the sense of history, the mastery of matter, the collectivization of values; this is the reason for that ebullient and seductive optimism with which Marxism has been identified. On the other hand, there are those more or less systematized currents of thought which react against Marxism both by stressing the interiority of the individual through a kind of spiritualized personalism, and by exalting personal freedom. The various forms of existentialism are involved in this reaction, ranging from the rebellion of Camus to the philosophy of Gabriel Marcel.

Certain other intellectual currents have attempted to initiate a dialectic be-

tween person and community. "Communitarian personalism," "tragic optimism"—these expressions of Mounier's have even been turned into aphorisms. Underlying this effort to reconcile apparently contradictory terms, there is an attempt to establish a synthesis which will co-ordinate these two lives. The influence of Mounier in France is quite significant.

HEER.— I should like, at this point in the discussion, to propose a more detailed analysis. At this time six currents of thought seem to me to be particularly important. Obviously I can deal with them here in only a cursory fashion. Let no one mistake this enumeration for a diatribe, but rather let it be taken as a crude oversimplification, each word of which is capable of revealing many complex ramifications: 1) scientism; 2) materialism; 3) gnosticism; 4) popular mysticism; 5) biologism; 6) the formation of the "soul" and the "spirit" by means of Oriental techniques.

### 1) Scientism

A global élite of men formed by technology and by the natural sciences, and found all over the world, from Moscow to Paris to Peking to Washington, firmly believes that it is only through science and technology that the great questions concerning humanity's future can be resolved. In the eyes of such men, humanistic and religious approaches to these questions are merely secondary and auxiliary.

In Europe this scientific world has a long tradition behind it. Beginning in thirteenth century Paris with certain Averroists, it developed at Paris and, through the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, at Padua, and finally spread to all parts of the world.

This belief in the salvific power of the natural sciences and technology is based upon certain inescapable realities, such as the increasing control over disease

and, to a certain extent, of death (man's average life expectancy rose from seventeen to twenty years in the Middle Ages, to thirty-three years in the eighteenth century, to seventy years today in those countries where industrial progress flourishes, and it may even reach ninety or one hundred twenty years). To that must be added the conquest of the world, the penetration of outer space, the liberation of the forces of the unconscious through psychoanalysis and psychology, and the conquest of hunger and material misery.

## 2) Dialectical Materialism

Dialectical materialism, which developed out of the premises of Hegel, Marx, Engels and Lenin, presents a world view and a morality whose historic significance and importance we do not yet really see. The Christian attempts at explanation are little more than inchoate stammerings. In many instances (such as, for example, Bochenski's *Pocket Book of World Communism*) we continue to base our understanding of the dialectic on erroneous attempts to see it in terms of scholastic categories. One still sees many Western theologians and thinkers yielding to cheap and facile judgments simply because they have seen Marxist dialectics only in terms of the relationship between scholasticism and the Party's Soviet philosophers. These Western commentators do not understand how profound "Diamat" (dialectical materialism) really is, nor do they see that it has already increased its influence over the relatively mediocre treatises of the Party's philosophers. In order to grasp the internal vitality, significance, and importance of dialectical materialism, it is not enough to study Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and their Soviet commentators. Rather should one investigate the profound spiritual traditions of the Russian people—with their ideas of life, the creative Spirit, and reality—for it is

there in large part that we discover the foundations of this powerful contemporary ideology.

## 3) Gnosis

For more than two thousand years currents of gnostic thought have been penetrating Europe and its Christianity. Today, under quite different forms, these gnostic currents make up a substratum of thought and feeling for many of our contemporaries. Its importance is basically this: it conceives of the spirit of man as having assumed all the functions of the Holy Spirit. Man, having been endowed with spirit, is seen as the lord, the creator, the builder of Creation; it is he who is responsible for the world and the Cosmos.

This "activation" of gnostic thought and of those mentalities which it inspires indicates in various ways a radical departure from the more passive witness of the ancient gnostics.

## 4) Popular Mysticism

There has been among many men in our day a kind of popular mysticism, partly derived from ancient Christian, European elements, and partly springing from the pre-Christian, non-European elements of general mysticism: God is in you; nothing harmful can happen to you; everything which is, is good; your entire life is in God; there is no sin; you, man, are the fruit of the tree and of reality; both living and dying, you are within the eternal becoming, within the eternal secret of life; you come from God and you are going to God. Almost all of the elements of this popular mysticism are susceptible of either a Christian or a non-Christian interpretation. The influence of this mysticism, like that of a certain type of gnosis, is found predominantly in the arts. It should be noted furthermore, that since Meister Eckhart,



Saint Ignatius, Fénelon, the separation of orthodox from heretical forms of mysticism has become one of the most complex facts for the differentiation of spirits.

### 5) Biologism

There is a certain kind of biologism which is narrowly linked to this popular mysticism: Life—life is all, life is becoming, it is struggle, it is an eternal process of growth. . . .

There are extremely high as well as extremely low forms of biologism. In the first instance it is concerned with the conservation of life in all its forms, with education and with growth; it looks upon life as something to be revered. On the other hand, there is the biologism which is concerned with the highest standard of living.

There is but one life—this one; let us therefore live this life with all its sufferings and passions, let us savor it down to the last morsel as we would the sweetest fruit. We have here, to put it in general terms, a concern with the arts of living, with eroticism, esthetic enjoyment, and the pleasures of the mind. It expresses itself not only in narcissism but also in the pleasures of poetry and literature.

As for popular mysticism, it is frequently quite difficult to distinguish between an immanent biologism on the one hand, and on the other an understandable longing, of Christian origin, for the "Zoe," for a life eternal both here below as well as in eternity.

It is important to note here that, just as with all those extra- or anti-Christian facets of the contemporary mind, this vulgarized mysticism springs from those authentic needs of man which spurious developments of Christian thought and feelings have failed to satisfy.

### 6) Orientalism

The oriental techniques for the formation of the mind and soul have, during the last half century or so, acquired an increasing importance in Europe and the West: yoga, Zen, various anthroposophic movements, Ouspensky, Gandhi, etc. An immature, ill-educated Europe, conscious of its inadequacies, looks to the East for formation and education, for a general improvement of the spiritual and intellectual forces of man—and without feeling any attendant obligation to join any church or any Christian confession.

A seductive goal: to become spiritually richer, intellectually more elevated, humanly more important, and at the same time to exclude the formative organisms of the Church as things petrified, vulgar and barbarous. A general atmosphere, a certain gnostic climate of the times, responds to the methods and techniques of the East. Thence arises the great yearning—to enter into sanctity, into reality itself, without having to undergo the influence of a Christian religion. This Eastern piety experienced in terms of life, the spirit, and the whole reality, is considered superior to a confessional Christianity which offers, as they see it, an inferior mode of coming to grips with God, man and reality.

One more word. The influence of these six currents of thought (currents which, I repeat, are neither merely negative nor anti-Christian) surrounds and penetrates everything as does the very air itself; it has permeated the atmosphere surrounding every modern activity and has touched even the minds of some Christians. I do hope I am not being misunderstood here. It would be senseless, insane, suicidal, for anyone to attempt to re-establish "witch hunts," such as those which ran their course during the confessional period of the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries. The insanity of

such a move becomes clear the moment we recall that many elements coming from outside of Christianity have become deeply rooted in and fused with Christianity itself—with its spirituality, its art, its poetry, as well as with the mentality of the faithful themselves.

*To what extent can we speak of the intellectual systems and the dominant mentalities of our time as atheistic?*

HEER.—The word "atheist" is a harmful and dangerous term. Let us recall briefly a few historical facts: the pagans during the second to fifth centuries accused the Christians of being atheists for refusing to participate in their religious ceremonies; during the confessional age (the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries) Lutherans, Calvinists and Catholics were in the habit of hurling the word "atheist" at one another; Calvin in particular used to designate as "atheists" and "satellites of Satan" those humanists who were not with him. And finally the eighteenth century saw the word "atheist" applied to Lutherans, Calvinists, Unitarians and anti-Trinitarians. There is consequently in Europe a long tradition of treating as "atheists" those whose faith differs from one's own.

If we use the word in the context of our discussion here, without attaching to it any polemical or pejorative overtones, using it rather as a merely descriptive term, we would have to say something like this: in all of the great currents of our time there are both theistic and atheistic elements.

But if we take the word "theism" in its Christian sense, then it must be recognized that a predominant part of contemporary thought is atheist, that is, outside of the Christian sense of God. It would seem, in fact, that in this time of a third Enlightenment, the intellectual and spiritual life of many is bound to become even further removed from the Christian sense of God, in much the

same way that the Sputniks and Luniks are removed from the earth—on which are found both the earthly paradise and Golgotha.

CHENU.—I am painfully aware of an atheization of the world which has touched not only individuals but even the very structures of the new humanity. But I too insist upon certain necessary distinctions; we tend to lump together under the term "atheism" too many disparate elements.

### Desacralization

The three phenomena which I have tried to distinguish a moment ago—a sense of history, the mastery of matter, the process of collectivization—each results in its own way in some kind of desacralization of the world. A good many of the values and human forces which formerly were oriented toward the sacral—and specifically the Christian sacral—have now fallen under the sway of the profane and have been taken over by the human community, becoming, if I may put it this way, mature in the process. The Church played the part of surrogate and quite naturally became thereby secularized. In the areas of economics, sociology, politics—indeed in the general structure of the world—this shift has resulted in a desacralization which we too quickly characterize as atheism. It is my belief that we must not adopt an attitude of withdrawal and contempt toward this desacralization. That man, in coming to a fuller consciousness of himself, risks setting himself up as a god over against God, is simply the reverse side of the coin of progress. It is a risk which poses the real possibility of man's coming to look upon himself as the sole cause of his progress, attributing nothing to the Supreme Cause who is God.

Yes, there is a risk, but there is also a corresponding opportunity: an opportunity to do away with a false conception

of God, a conception which sees Him as a kind of jack-of-all-trades trouble-shooter, waiting on the sidelines to jump in and bolster our ineptitudes, whether these ineptitudes concern our ultimate destiny or our ability to organize and govern society. A sacral society tended to see God as intervening wherever and whenever man proved impotent. This was a species of inferior religion which, at its extreme, resulted in superstition. The fact that man has become conscious of his own strength does not necessarily involve his rejection of God. It should, on the contrary, force man to coordinate his own causality, his personalism, his own co-creative power, with the Supreme Cause, whose transcendence in no way reduces the autonomy of the secular, any more than it reduces human freedom.

We have clearly arrived at that moment in history when the divinization of man is passing through a phase which is, in fact, atheist. It is the modern version of the Promethean temptation to snatch fire from the heavens. In reality it is possible for Prometheus to steal fire from the heavens and at the same time to recognize the existence of God.

*Is there some danger that masses of people may be getting accustomed to living in a world without God?*

CHENU.—The danger is certainly great, especially for those people who are described as primitive, in situations where genuine religious values are often shattered along with superstitions.

### **The Atheism of Yesterday and Today**

*Do you feel that contemporary atheism is comparable to that of former times?*

CHENU.—The more or less consistent atheism of today differs somewhat from eighteenth century atheism, which affected only a few people—even the *libertins* believed, after a fashion, in God. Contemporary atheism is more positive:

it rejects God, and yet it is perhaps rejecting a false God, a God who is but poorly understood. This could very well provide a favorable opportunity for the affirmation of the kind of transcendent God made known to us by the Christian fathers and doctors. This is, however, a decidedly optimistic way of viewing atheism. For my part I have no intention of yielding to a pessimism which is fearful of a massive atheization of entire continents, nor by the same token, will I give way to a naive optimism. The situation is a dramatically grave one, and yet I believe the Christian has the resources, within his religion, to master the situation.

### **The Quest for Truth**

*Is it possible that since man is no longer concerned with God that he has likewise abandoned his search for truth?*

CHENU.—Prescinding from the immediately religious dimension of truth, we can, I believe, still talk about truth as remaining within the appetite of men. Undoubtedly man has not taken the measure of the depths of truth and has, in fact, reduced it to his own measure. I do believe, however, that the various levels of scientific research are the expression of a truly amazing hunger for truth—to say nothing of a certain aspiration for human brotherhood. Certain great savants have a sense of the infinite which I would not hesitate to characterize as religious. In a man like Oppenheimer, for example, the human morality of science assumes an extraordinary grandeur, and his vocabulary often passes over into a decidedly religious language. Yet the controlled scientific passion for truth has rarely if ever arrived at the truth of a personal God. It is perhaps there that a check-point will be encountered.

*Has not the norm of truth been re-*

*placed by the norm of success, the kind of success usually associated with Anglo-Saxon pragmatism?*

CHENU.— I believe that the pragmatism which held the field some thirty years ago, both as a philosophy and as an attitude of mind, has re-emerged today simply as a kind of egoistic empiricism, and that it has given rise to no important currents of thought.

### The Place of Ideologies

*Today there are no longer any crusades or wars of religion. Is this a sign of tolerance or of indifference?*

CHENU.— It is not, in my opinion, a question of negative indifference or mediocre abstention. We have, in fact, witnessed some very ferocious brands of intolerance which in our time are no longer directed toward strictly religious areas, but which are rather concerned with ideological conflicts. These conflicts are basically economic, political and cultural. Here too we have one more aspect of the process of desacralization. Religion can benefit to the extent to which it is no longer directly compromised, and, if it is its own mistress, to the extent to which it can refuse to be caught up in this ideological violence.

*What is your opinion of the ideologies of our time?*

CHENU.— The term ideology is an equivocal one. Sometimes it suggests the strength of the idea both with respect to matter and to all conditioning factors acting upon it. But it also denotes opposition to the "realistic," purely positivistic view of things, a separation of the idea from economic needs and biologic forces on the one hand, and from the forces of social organization on the other.

Those ideologies which are linked to political movements, to groups of peoples, appear to be so many forms of a kind of particularism which stands in opposition to man's universal quest for

truth, which is one. But to the degree that we have a philosophy which embraces the totality of the universe—including the world of matter—we stand free of ideology, which must of its nature proceed by means of abstraction, in much the same way as did eighteenth century rationalism.

For that reason we cannot, as I see it, speak of a "Christian ideology." The Christian religion, in so far as it is authentic, is, in a very real sense, anti-ideological. It is a mistake to set up the Christian "ideology" in opposition to the Marxist ideology, not merely for tactical reasons, but more importantly, for reasons which have to do with the truth of things. The reason is that a religion cannot be an ideology without degrading itself. A religion is something other than a system of ideas.

*What place do you see Christian thought as occupying within the network of forces which, taken together, go to make up what we have been calling the contemporary mind?*

CHENU.— It is clear that certain Christian personalities have some status in the world of contemporary thought. It does not, however, seem that they have succeeded in setting up currents as powerful or as widespread as, for example, Marxism has succeeded in doing.

Indeed it is my belief that Christianity is today thought of less as a type of philosophy than as a *religion*, in the precise meaning of the word, so that its philosophical ascendancy is less formidable than it once was. It is no longer possible to speak of a "Christian philosophical system." I am thinking here of a coherent explanation of the world which would be specifically Christian. The Gospel is not, after all, a system. The return to the Gospel has in some way tended to undermine a philosophy which would set itself up as a strictly Christian system of explanation.

There is, of course, a Christian interpretation of the modern phenomena of work, of matter, of society, but the evangelically-centered Christian does not seek to erect a system. He is rather a pluralist when it comes to philosophy.

*Is Christianity today searching for a philosophy, a new theology, in much the same way that the thirteenth century saw the rise of what we now call Thomism?*

CHENU.— There has not yet taken place in the twentieth century the kind of thing which took place in the thirteenth, viz., St. Thomas's assimilating of Aristotle's thought, giving it a renewed relevance for a new age. Our new age, on the other hand, has certainly not as yet been integrated by Christian thought. The contemporary return to the Gospel, just as it would reject a certain brand of Christendom, will also be found to resist a certain type of philosophy. But just as this evangelical renaissance might very well give rise to a new kind of Christendom, so too might it seek out a contemporary philosophical expression for its religious content. Today, as always, the return to the Gospel has sought to de-emphasize all philosophy and indeed even all theology. We must, however, be on our guard against that type of Christian mentality which would deny the validity of rational values. I am convinced that any world view based on the Gospel simply must work out some means for achieving a rational confrontation with the world. It has got to develop a world vision, within which different options are available—all within the fundamental unity of the Gospel. This is an extremely difficult problem, and yet it would be regrettable if the extraordinary evangelical shock which has aroused entire sectors of the Church should turn out to be abortive simply because it denies that rational thought is in any way relevant to the problems of our time.

Any such attempt as that suggested by the question (concerning Christianity's searching for a new philosophy or theology) pre-supposes a kind of spiritual digestion which is far from having taken place. Our world and its values are, furthermore, so ambiguous that it is difficult to make any critique of them in purely rational terms.

*Is the relationship of Christian thought to modern thought one of conflict, watchful attention, dialogue, or creative communion?*

HEER.— Christian spirituality, if it is truly animated by faith, is capable of assimilating elements of all the intellectual currents of our time. There are discussions and dialogues yet to come which will be quite fertile for Christianity, since the health of Christianity needs such things in much the same way that the human body needs vitamins for its health. Through its contacts with the many-faceted Gnosis of antiquity, the Church was able to draw off the riches of Greek, Germanic, Latin, Celtic and Oriental spirituality.

The new forms of this vital dialogue, understood as a life process, have as yet neither been worked out nor experienced. These forms, whatever their outcome, are as yet only in their initial stages.

Christianity's relationship with contemporary thought is a varied one: it is at once a relationship of watchful attention, of dialogue, and of creative communion. Whatever conflict there is can be overcome only through collaboration.

The Christian must give many conditional "ayes" and "nays" to those of his brethren who are of another mind. To be able to say "no" to those who do not think as he does, the Christian must first love them with a love that is pure, he must enter into a relationship of mutual help and collaboration—in short, into a true Christian brotherhood with them.



If this is lacking, the Christian "no" can never really touch the mind or the person of his partner. At this point certain of St. Thomas's principles, in new garb, may be relevant: the Christian, before passing judgment, must first understand, understand, understand! He must learn to recognize the reality of the world. He must begin to know and understand attitudes, mentalities and facts which are alien to his thinking. These are the things the Christian must do before engaging in any attempt at explanation or dialogue, or any other kind of loving but firm encounter between two minds.

Many Christian polemicists who imagine themselves capable of parading about in a bear's skin (that is, in some sense, the skin of the dialectical materialist), show up in this garb at intellectual cocktail parties; but in fact they have not yet seen the bear. In this way some "Christian polemicists" of our day involve themselves in a struggle against non-Christian thought, a struggle which is both sterile and illusory.

### A Dialogue of Opposition

The various postures of contradiction (as distinct from total hostility)—opposition, dialogue, discussion with the enemy—are closely related to each other. The Christian has the duty, as well as the opportunity, of freeing the God-created nucleus which stands at the center of non-Christian thought and of diverting this hard core from its harmful developments. But the Christian can do this only if, believing and trusting profoundly in God, he is persuaded that no important body of thought is essentially evil, diabolical or damned.

Here we can distinguish several different kinds of mind within Christianity today, just as we can in the thirteenth century, when the Franciscans and the Augustinians fiercely opposed St. Thom-

as on the grounds that he was willing to come to terms with non-Christian minds—Persian, Eastern, Islamic, atheist. "Sic et non": the new forms of "yes" and "no," under the triple aspect of "co-existence — collaboration — opposition," have still to be worked out experimentally through suffering. The spirit, after all, is fire rather than paper: he who dares to approach the fire of the spirit delivers himself over to the flames which will consume him. And these internal fires must not be replaced by the external fires of an inquisition nor by any definitive condemnation.

*Do you think that Christians are ready for such a dialogue?*

CHENU.— We must think here not only of a specially qualified elite. In France and elsewhere an effective reversal of spiritual attitudes and mentalities is taking place, a reversal which has been brought about by means of various movements of thought and action within the Christian community. Within a perspective commonly referred to as "missionary," it has been firmly established that the Christian must be *in* the world, that the Church itself, although it is divine, can achieve its self-determination only with reference to the world to which it has been sent, the world in which it must implant its roots, and this regardless of what judgments are ultimately passed on this world. I take the word "judgment" here in its evangelical sense: severity accompanied by intelligence.

### The End of the Age of Constantine

Christians will thereby be led to withdraw from a certain type of Christendom which I would refer to as "Constantinian Christianity," a Christianity which is bound up with an entire cycle of civilization whose geographical surface was made up of the countries bordering the Mediterranean and whose prototype was

the Emperor Constantine, he who cloaked the Christian religion in his own imperial authority. But after all sorts of avatars, the longest of which was that of the Holy Roman Empire, this type of rapport between the Church and a specific cultural, political, social *statute* of humanity is from now on a thing of the past. Christianity's relationship to a world which is completely different from that of Constantine must be profoundly re-thought. Despite the persistence of certain myths, medieval Christendom is, from this point of view, obsolete.

In this vast perspective the Renaissance and the Reformation—which, we are told, gave birth to the modern world—are themselves seen as merely episodes. The revolution through which we are living today has a breadth and a fullness including the geographical—quite different from the already ambiguous stirrings and agitations of the sixteenth century. We are passing from the European continent into the entire planet, with its rapid growth of population, its diversity of civilizations, its totally unforeseen kinds of human behavior. The very posture of Christianity is being culturally and geographically modified.

### The Conditions for Dialogue

In the face of this novel situation there are, in effect, four attitudes available to the Christian. The "Constantinian" Christian is inclined on the whole toward an attitude of conflict. He sees the deficiencies of this new world and he sees them accurately, but he uses them as an excuse to turn his back on the great aspirations of this century. Others are more curious, and remain in an attitude of expectation, sympathetic yet reserved, in watchful attention. As for the evangelical type of Christian, he is inclined to enter into a dialogue with the new man. He adopts this attitude, not only for reasons of temperament, but

also out of faithfulness to the Gospel, or more precisely to the mystical implications of the Incarnation which he applies to twentieth century humanity. There remains now only what has been called here the attitude of "creative communion." The Christian who would go so far as that would, it seems to me, be presuming too much about the future. For the interior powers of contemporary humanity are still too ambiguous to allow our immediate participation in their effort. But dialogue allows and even presupposes the critical spirit, and here and there we see certain men entering into the dialogue, men whose intrepid faith places them beyond suspicion. Among several examples I can think of is La Pira's recent trip to Russia, where his attitude was one of bold and ingenuous fearlessness.

### A Perfect Openness

This dialogue, surrounded as it is by ambiguities, must be entered into with a perfect openness; if this were lacking the participants would not only fail in their obligations to abstract truth, but also in their obligations to each other. And there will come a time when, to preserve the purity of the dialogue, a refusal will have to be forthcoming: this refusal will come at that moment when the new man with all of his resources and powers comes to regard himself as self-sufficient—whether this be on the level of a history which would discover its own fullness and finality within itself; or on the level which would see man as the lord of the universe because he controls its material resources; or on the level of that collectivization of all values in a community increasingly given over to coercion. Each time that man, through his advances and discoveries, begins to see himself as self-sufficient, a parting of the ways must occur. There is pride, as the moralist tells us, in the satisfaction of the man

who thinks of himself as being able, on his own, to fulfill his destiny, to master the universe, to organize society, without any reference to an Absolute, even though this Absolute is immanent in its action and freedom. Any final turning in of man upon himself obviously does away with any overture in the direction of divinity and, consequently, with any chance for success in the dialogue. The Christian's effort must be to preserve the dialogue, so that on the level of problems, if not solutions, his partner will remain open to its pursuit.

Not every Christian, obviously, is capable of that kind of dialogic relationship; indeed there are many Christians who, during their stay upon earth must be "protected." It would, however, be heart-rending if the Church, unconsciously guided by the myths of an anachronistic Christendom, should give itself over to a protectionist attitude. The Church must nourish the faith of its members in such a way that a good number will be able to enter into the dialogue.

*Does the contemporary mind appear to you to be hostile, indifferent, or receptive to the Christian message?*

HEER.— There is something in the contemporary mind which is akin to ancient Greece and Rome: it is as hostile as it is indifferent to the Christian message. But it appears to me that the contemporary mind will be even more hostile and more indifferent to Christianity should the latter renounce its efforts to initiate and sustain the dialogue. Much of the hatred and the scorn which many powerful minds have displayed in our time toward Catholicism is the product of a love betrayed: it is the defense and rebellion of the man who has been wounded. Christians, for their part, have not seen this fact clearly enough.

It is, moreover, the Christian struggle with the non- or anti-Christian which will most effectively disinfect the atmos-

phere. Each day brings further evidence of this truth. Soviet philosophers, for example, give great attention to the serious thinkers of the West. We cannot even begin the necessary intellectual struggle, much less carry it off, if we remain content with slogans (such as "Materialism") and with atomic bombs—both of which, in their evasion of reality, are twin manifestations of a similar suicidal impulse.

### Potential Overtures

CHENU.— By way of answering your question I should like to take up once more my analysis of the three conditions of the contemporary mind. I have already suggested what the inherent dangers are in these positions, dangers which lead to the shutting out of God's Word. But there are also some potential openings in the situation.

I believe, for example, that the "sense of history" is compatible with a notion of Christianity whose mystery is revealed in an *historical fact*: the fact of the Incarnation, with its preludes and its consequences; the fact of God's becoming, as we say, an historical person. From this derives an historical vision of the world's destiny, a view which no doubt transcends that history, but which is none the less joined to it.

We must, of course, attempt to clear up the ambiguities which are present here—and not only here, but in every human reality. The resources for attempting such a clarification are at hand, beginning with those of the Biblical movement. It is thanks to the latter that ordinary Christians have become aware of Christianity as an economy of salvation rather than as a more or less timeless system of thought.

The control over matter allows man to re-discover a concrete sense of the world's creation. Man is, after all, intimately bound up with this Creation,

according to the words of God Himself in the opening passages of Genesis, which we read today with new understanding: God has not created a finished world; He has confided to man the task of bringing Creation to its terminus, making man, as it were, a kind of co-creator. This is a traditional theme, especially in the theology and mysticism of the Greek fathers. We in the West have lost sight of it, a loss which is one of the by-products of a harmful Augustinianism.

It is easier to see the dangers than the opportunities involved in the collectivization of man. If there is a personalist view of the world it is certainly that of the Christian, for whom salvation is effected by and in love, and therefore by and in a strictly personal relationship between himself and God, a relationship extending ultimately to all of his brothers, beyond all conditioning factors, I was going to say beyond every society. The modern tendency to collectivization reminds us, however, that this personal salvation is realized only within a kingdom, the kingdom of God, already present among the people of God in the Old Testament and today in the Church, where we think and live in a community of grace. The Christian re-discovery of the sense of community is certainly not without relevance to the concurrent process of collectivization.

In these three processes then we can distinguish a true from a false spirituality: Nietzsche has said that Christianity is the Platonism of the people. This was true, unfortunately, of a certain brand of Christianity. It would seem that farsighted Christians today are moving further away from these vestigial remains of Plato or—to take the Christian Plato—of St. Augustine. Certainly there is no need for the philosophers to reject Plato, nor the theologians St. Augustine. There is, however, an internal redressing of the balance which operates against the excesses of this Platonism—even in its

Christian garb—tipping the scales in the direction of a realism which is historical, materialist and even sociological. It is this re-orientation which seems to me to characterize the Christianity of our time.

*Father Rahner has spoken of the chances for the Church.\* What do you think they are at this time?*

CHENU.—The first opportunity consists in our awareness of the historical and geographical relativity of what I just referred to as the Christendom of Constantine. The Church must be literally Catholic. The very word "catholic" is in the process of recovering its original meaning of "universal" instead of being restricted to the Catholic-Protestant antinomy, which is valuable, but which is, nevertheless, becoming obsolete as a result of the pressing need for the universality of the Church.

One of the most important emphases in contemporary theology's discussion of the "notes of the Church," is that of universality. To the extent to which the Church limits itself to a particular geographical, historical or cultural locale, its effectiveness as a witness is diminished. It must be acknowledged that the Church has been thoroughly impregnated—right down to its doctrinal formulations—with elements of Western civilization. These elements do, of course, have tremendous value, and the very fact that the Church should have expressed its message in categories deriving from the Greco-Roman world is significant. There can be no question of rejecting such doctrinal "formulations." It remains none the less true that the Church neither can nor wants to be Roman at the expense of its universality. Rome is no longer in Rome; the ancient imperial unity has given way to the mysticism of the City of Peter. But now in order to

\* This is the title of one section of his recent book, *Free Speech in the Church* (Sheed & Ward). Tr.

address itself to this new world comprising the Far East, India, the Arab nations, Africa—the Church of Christ, the Church of Pentecost, without losing any of the accumulated capital of its earlier human experience, must go beyond that experience.

### A Missionary Stirring

The second opportunity follows from the first. Faced with the appeal for an effective universality, the Church feels within itself the first tremors of a missionary stirring. It is desirous of getting outside of itself in order to enter into a dialogue with this new world—a world which is, if you like, pagan. I prefer the word “profane,” in the sense that this new world’s values are as yet unbaptized. The phrase “missionary Church” means more than a kind of venturing forth beyond the walls of an enclosed city and returning each evening. It means rather planting roots in a universe, a society, a humanity, which has not yet heard the Word of God and which is without the means of hearing that Word. In order to speak to this world the Church will have to go out beyond the physical confines of the mission, with all the openness and freedom this implies. The result will be a certain tension within Christendom between the pull of institutional solidity on the one hand, and the uncertainties of the mission on the other. But the apostolic “tradition,” if it means anything, implies such areas of innovation and discovery.

The central and primary concern is, of course, the proclamation of the Word of God. But before this, and in order that the Word be heard, a preliminary presence is required which, above all, will not seek to expropriate or to dominate, nor will it have recourse to institutional means, which must have inevitable political implications. (These are, as Maritain says, poor means indeed.) The

advance guard of such a mission will perhaps manifest itself in the simple presence of groups of Christians, who today are becoming more numerous, as much in the underdeveloped countries as in those sociological areas of Christendom which have become disaffected. I am thinking of such groups, among many others, as the Little Brothers and Little Sisters of Jesus.\*

### A Silent Presence

In the final accounting such a silent witness is actually the most effective since the premature word would simply not receive a hearing. In an extraordinary way, the strictly evangelical word “witness” is thus placed in relief. Faith presents itself to the twentieth century Christian not only as an interiorization of the Word of God, but also as a proclamation of the Good News, a proclamation which, in its first stage, implies bearing witness.

One could assemble a great number of facts which would, in a striking way, give the Church a countenance quite different from that of the older Christendom, with its moral, social and even political strength. Such a face-lifting is definitely involved in a return to the Gospel.

*Will the attention the Church pays to the world and the overtures it makes be enough to overcome the built-in obstacles which this new world poses to evangelization?*

CHENU.— Even apart from original sin, we can say that men, individually and even collectively, do in fact offer resistance to the very hearing of the Christian message. But this is an obstacle which the Gospel has always encountered, just as it encountered it in the Roman Empire. This has been historically the normal condition under which

\* Cf. John Todd, “The Little Brothers of Jesus,” *Cross Currents* Fall 1955. Tr.



the Gospel has been preached. We will have the same difficulties, the same struggles, perhaps even the same setbacks. But if we believe that the Christ is come not merely for a particular civilization but for all of humanity, we must believe that these obstacles can be overcome by the purity of the message and by the discipline which such an encounter requires. Conversion is always a difficult task and the conversion of huge blocs of people numbering hundreds of millions of souls sometimes appears next to impossible.

*Without speaking yet of conversion, can we at least hope that the witness of presence will develop quickly into a true evangelization?*

CHENU.—The apostles of our day know that henceforth the time of silent witness is far longer than that envisioned by an established Christendom. A rush toward Baptism as the official, public, sacramental act of entry into the Church is not foreseen by our missionaries, a condition which runs counter to our impatience and our Western stability. There are indeed certain areas—I am thinking now of the Moslem world—where Baptism is in practice rarely administered, according to an official custom, for fear of abuses arising from haste. To the extent to which Baptism would remove the neophyte from his ordinary milieu, in a certain sense it constitutes an obstacle. Baptism presupposes a humanity pre-disposed to receive it. It is the same Baptism as that administered to Clovis and the Franks, but now it is administered to a humanity whose community attitudes involve totally different needs.

Between the stage of silent witness and the stage of Baptism, there may very well be a long period of preaching the Gospel. And during this period there will have to be an assimilation, a borrowing, of the language, the categories, the modes of perception and expression, the

symbolic and esthetic forms of the people. The efficacious introduction and then the shock of encounter of the Gospel thus preached will come about through fraternal love. Fraternal love is so basic a condition that any public preaching of the Gospel would be senseless and would stand no chance unless it were first preceded by a profound sympathy, by a quiet, unspoken understanding.

### The Poor

*Isn't this an especially propitious time for the Gospel to make contact with the poor ones of the earth, now that the free world is beginning to concern itself with the growing misery of mankind?*

CHENU.—The poor have always been and will always be in fact the first clients of the Gospel, the first to listen to it. The very rich do not hear it; they no longer have anything to hope for. The scores of sermons we have heard on this problem suggest that it has assumed a grandeur which is both admirable and tragic. For today it is no longer a question of individuals who are poor, but of entire peoples and nations who make up the proletariat.

If the Church has been stirred by missionary rumblings, if it has begun to open outward to embrace a new universality, it is because the evangelical instinct carries it toward the poor ones of the earth. The Church has neither the economic, the technological nor the political means by which to aid these peoples, any more than it had the means for penetrating the Roman Empire. Nor is it desirable that the Church should be equipped with those institutional means which are henceforth properly the instruments of profane human society. But it is up to Christians to be, within these institutions, according to the formula of Pius XII, the leaven which will give a spiritual meaning to

all of these techniques of solidarity. Perhaps there lies the supreme witness which the Church can render, and perhaps there too lies the true course of the Church's strength.

We must be aware that this evangelical instrument, with its economic and political implications, cannot avoid colliding head-on with certain powerful propertied interests. Father Lebreton ran into this sort of thing in Peru, where capitalist pressure groups refused to accept necessary central planning. In much the same way the bishops of Madagascar experienced this pressure when that state was on its way to achieving political independence. It is here, however, that far-sighted economists can begin to take into account the aspirations of the poor.

*How, in your opinion, can the Church and Christians respond to the hopes of the modern world?*

HEER.—The phrase "Christian militant," the "soldier" spoken of by St. Paul, must take on new meaning. The era which has just begun is a time of new struggles, of new experiences, of new sufferings.

Too many Christians today present themselves to their contemporaries as refractory, blind to those sufferings of birth, life and death which their neighbor is undergoing in the younger, developing societies. This lack of understanding is linked to ersatz developments of spirituality. I should prefer to speak here in words which are harsh and perhaps even provoking. Many Christians do not in any way look upon the world with Christian eyes. Down through the centuries they have uttered in the confessional only the sins of minor seminarians, the dreams and sexual desires of celibate clerics, sins of "the flesh," taken here in its narrowest sense. The great sins which have to do with our relationships with other men, the sins of murder, defamation, suicide—the refusal to devel-

op the potential in oneself, the refusal to carry out the work of God, the work of our minds, our souls, our bodies—these are the sins of which people are unaware, the sins which they don't understand. Millions of Christians believe their souls can rest in peace because they have confessed "their" sins. They haven't the slightest consciousness of having themselves contributed to the civil war raging throughout Europe and the world. They have at least contributed to this situation by the sin of omission.

These petty sins—sexual anxieties, our timidities in the face of the world, the obsessions of the Christian who is in a permanent state of puberty—these are the things keeping us from seeing clearly those great virtues which, in this new struggle with the world, are so urgently needed: the virtue of tolerance (bearing one's own and one's neighbor's cross is what St. Paul calls tolerance), generosity, patience; knowing how to say "no" lovingly, not for the sake of any quick conversion, but as a way of sustaining and nourishing our neighbor, however "other" that neighbor may be.

### **The Church as an Atomic Pile**

In the search for new forms of Christian spirituality we must seek first within ourselves, within our Christianity, within our Church.

The new Christian spirituality will be recognized by its serenity, by the joy it takes in being quite "other" with respect to the beloved neighbor; it will be recognized by its sensitivity to suffering, by its understanding of the countless "hidden" forms of suffering and of torture. These are the qualities which indicate a more profound, a more mature consciousness of sin—the sin against the person, against society, against the world. A consciousness of sin, without egotism or sentimentality, with hatred neither of one's neighbor nor of one's self; a consciousness of

sin intimately bound up with a great energy and vitality: all of these sins can be overcome by being transformed. The Church can be compared to an atomic pile transforming negative forces into positive, transforming contaminated matter into life-giving energy.

We must, finally, go beyond the "petty" sins and virtues of a Christendom in love with itself, a sentimental Christendom inhumanly restricting itself to the confines of Europe. We must conquer the "gangrene," the cancer of egocentric spirituality, those Manichean and Jansenistic hopes and fears which still plague us.

### A Still Greater Bridge

There is a very great danger that we will shortly be witnessing, in Africa, in Asia, Latin America, the growth of new and powerful fortress Churches, outside of Christianity, fighting bitterly for the maxim: "cujus regio, ejus religio." It is precisely for that reason that we as Christians must consciously and firmly conceive of the Church as "Rome, the open city," a greater Rome led by the Sovereign Pontiff and by the bishops, all of whom are the successors of the Apostles. We must conceive of the Church as made up of fraternal communities under the direction of the Holy Father and bishops, whose magisterium must be seen as the task of constructing a still greater bridge.

Here then is the service we must render: the building of bridges over and through time between men, groups, and movements—regardless of the kind of contact required by the confrontation.

One point more must be made here. The life and vitality of the historical Church will depend upon new relationships, a new kind of dialogue, between the "fathers" and the "sons" within the Church. At this new moment in history the great "yes," the assent, an understanding and a blessing must be wrested

from the "fathers"—the popes and the bishops, if necessary, even through the cross, through martyrdom. The increasing historical strength of the Church is linked to its growing understanding of itself, an understanding of the sons and daughters it once drove from its bosom: Joan of Arc, Savonarola, Erasmus, Rosmini, and dozens from more recent history. Only by growing *inwardly* will the Church be able to grow *outwardly*, and thereby come to a keen understanding of new struggles, sufferings and joys.

### A Work of Reconciliation

The great categorical imperative for the growth *in* and *of* the Church, the imperative of its historical strength, is to be found in the last words of the Old Testament, so clearly expressed by Malachi: "Behold I will send you Elias the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the sons, and the heart of the sons to their father: lest I come, and strike the earth with anathema."

The reconciliation of the fathers with the sons demands a radically new kind of relationship—a reconciliation, not a submission, of the sons to the fathers which will be in terms of a pure and generous attachment. The fathers in their turn must bend themselves fully toward their sons, i.e., the people, the Gentiles, all of mankind. Only then will the "crushed heart" (it is Luther's term) of the sons, of the "pagans," of the "atheists," of the "anti-Christians," etc., (these terms are no longer valuable)—only then will the heart be able to open itself to the fathers. Yet how many more times will the "fathers" and "sons" still find themselves locked in passionate and agonizing struggle before this great reconciliation will take place?

The explicit or implicit hope of many men outside the Church is that this great

fatherhood shall come to pass, a fatherhood which will preserve and guide and above all reconcile, a fatherhood which will build bridges between all races and between all men, thereby acting as the guardian of that great indispensable peace which is yet to come. The fate of Western Christianity depends, humanly speaking, on this mission of peace.

### **Only One Type of Proof of God**

The Catholic Christian of our time is in need of a mentality which, confident of the future, truly hungers after reality. He is in need of an authentic trust in himself, of a deep rooting in the present, of a reconciliation with his own time and with his contemporaries. Leo XIII's appeal to French Catholics to rally to the Republic suggests the nature of our present and future tasks: the reconciliation with our time and with our contemporaries can be accomplished only through patience, through the joy we take in those new struggles whose forms remain yet to be discovered.

Our numerous non-Christian contemporaries and the spirit of our time which will have nothing to do with Christianity, will possibly accept only one form of evidence concerning God: the presence of God, His act of presence in the fullness and power of a spiritual life perfectly incarnated in a human person.

He who wishes to bear witness to a personal God must enlarge and perfect his personality, transforming it into a lens, a small prism whose facets allow the Great Sun, the "Sol Invictus" to be seen.

The fear that many Christians have of their age, their cowardice before the present and the future, casts a cloud between many non-Christians and the Divine Sun which is the Christ, the Sun whose rays penetrate the spirits of all men. And it is we who must create these facets, not only among ourselves, the Christians, but also among all the men who are about us.

*Translated by JAMES J. GREENE*

# THAT WORST, MOST DANGEROUS LIFE

EMMANUEL MOUNIER

**I**F THE Christian is congenitally a sick man, quick, then let him be *made* to die. Mankind is weary of wasting its best strength in fighting against a perpetually moribund invalid. So speaks the young neo-pagan.

But what do we mean by sickness? It is easy enough to say "he is sick," but to what state of health are we referring? Are we not always somebody's sufferer if we deny ourselves even a little of that which he feeds upon, and feed ourselves on that which poisons him?

There is much talk today of virile brotherhood, of virile order, of virile community. The word is not without disquieting overtones. The complete man is not a monolith, but a work of art. Upon a would-be strictly deter-

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*Emmanuel Mounier, who founded ESPRIT in 1932, is the author of THE CHARACTER OF MAN (Harper), BE NOT AFRAID (Harper), PERSONALISM (Grove), and INTRODUCTION TO EXISTENTIALISM (Macmillan). The first article printed in CROSS CURRENTS (Fall 1950, Vol I, No. 1) was Mounier's talk to the 1949 Semaine des Intellectuels Catholiques, "Christian Faith and Civilization," given just a few weeks before his death.*

*It is only just that after ten years of publication, we should again draw on the thought of one of the luminous examples of the committed Christian intelligence. The accompanying article represents Chapter II of THE SPOIL OF THE VIOLENT, published by the Harvill Press, London, in 1955. It is a translation, by Katherine Watson, of L'AF-FRONTMENT CHRÉTIEN, (Editions de la Baconière, Neuchâtel, 1944). Passages in italics, unless otherwise indicated, are quotations from Nietzsche.*

mined sexuality he bases a psychic system which should be dominantly monosexual, but with a share of the qualities of the opposite sex, which share touches off in him a movement towards complete humanity. The absence of this priming develops in the man an excessive masculinity, in the woman an excessive femininity in which the type is already caricatured, and whence derive many forms of unbalance. What is true of individuals is also true in the case of groups. A society which, like that of 1900, demands too much of graciousness, distinction, musical sensibility and idealism, enfeebles itself by becoming too feminine. A society which restricted its appeal solely to the male virtues of hardness, strength and action, would disorganize itself by a sort of symmetrical hypervirilization. Christianity, which saves man and woman, preaches strength with sweetness, the heroic virtues at the same time as perfect obedience, spiritual violence through self-renunciation; it cannot allow itself to be drawn into one form of exclusiveness under pretext of combating the opposite form. But it is not therefore indifferent to the eddies of feeling in history. Its eternal destiny may depend, at one moment in history, upon a passionate partiality for some one virtue whose weakening is the menace of the hour. It has it in its power today to rally the masculine forces, as, contrariwise, it once tempered medieval uncouthness by courtesy and the exaltation of woman. But it would no more make an idol of masculinity than of femininity. It should astonish no one to find it, like God himself, everywhere, but everywhere also opposed to idols.



These reservations made, the fact remains that at the end of a period of alexandrianism a virile renaissance appears to be, if not the substance of, at least the necessary preface to, a spiritual renewal. In this larger view, the male virtues are no longer the instrument of a narrow, separative function. In that zone where the most individual personal experience approaches universality, femininity's response to human anguish is generous self-effacement and an unconditional gift, whilst masculinity represents conscious control and insatiable aspiration. We need both the one and the other. However, the reaction we are witnessing and in which we are participants, is already upsetting this difficult balance.

Under our eyes a new stoicism is coming to birth from the death of God even as the old arose upon the tomb of the gods; it, too, is a stiffening at the extreme limit of doubt. In its hour of defeat, vital confidence, the last of our energies, is exacerbating itself in vast aimless longings, interior grandeur and cosmic exaltation: solitary tension and joyous availability, harshness and philanthropy, mix and mingle therein rather than harmonize, sometimes in a heroic dignity of acceptance, sometimes in a wilful stubbornness the very serenities of which are breathless and the humour disconsolate. This is the dominant spiritual state of a world in which, every attempt at explanation having foundered, the scientific after the theological, the impossible is assuming its most uncompromising meaning. Not only is this world an irrational world, the mystery of which—pregnant as much of promise as of anguish—blurs its outlines: it is, too, a world positively, fully and definitively absurd, alien to reason as to goodness, deaf to every call uttered by man. It is not that it merely returns distressing replies to the

questions we ask, but, far worse: it does not reply at all, because it has nothing to say in response. I think of Camus' recent testimony, for instance, a testimony profoundly honest and entirely free from romanticism and all literary exhibitionism.<sup>1</sup> To speak of despair in face of this universe, is to exaggerate. Despair is the tortured witness to an infinite which withholds without denying itself, or of an immortality self-consuming but inexhaustible. The tone of the times is much more that of a dull-witted unhope, an empty absence, not the mourning of hope but its certificate of failure. Upon this un-hope, statistical and impartial as a report, we pass no moral judgment. Like hope, it can be either good or bad in quality. It is the reason for the increasing number of fish-eyes one sees in the faces of the crowd, eyes which haunted a novel of the inter-war years; or for that idiotically hard gaze one sees in young men of action. On a higher level, it reaches out in desperate attempts towards "the ultimate boundaries," "the extreme of the possible." The knight of the absurd comes forward as the hero of the modern age. He hurls himself, without expectations, body and soul, in the face of nothing. No complicity, natural or supernatural, supports him. Never, it seems, did folly more entire rush towards the abysses of experience: never, courage more absolute.

When he turns towards the Christian universe, this scout of nothingness is seized with irritation, like a fighting man who finds himself suddenly in the rear again. He is alone. He is lost.

<sup>1</sup>*The Myth of Sisyphus (Knopf)* If indeed no man may set himself up as a judge of another's experience, yet this experience strikes one as altogether more naked, more philosophically happy than the kindred one which Georges Bataille gave us an overwrought confidential account of—*L'expérience intérieure*—at about the same time.

Alone even in public activity, even among men. Lost to every consolation of the heart, of reason or of faith, since for him everything is from this instant forth irrevocable and doomed to certain end. The Christian for his part is a man surrounded, prevented, attended upon all sides. Even when grace deserts him, and when men fail him, he is still in his dereliction aware of the obscure presence of invisible fidelities. He is a man saved. However grievous the darkness of his faith and the uncertainty of personal salvation, he knows that the ultimate light is promised him and that his personal assumption into the "impossible" is dependent only upon an act of his free will. It is this familiarity with the universe and this confidence of heart which constitute for the ascetic of unbelief the fundamental weakness of Christianity. That it has been able to divert the tragic sense of life in certain secondary problems is acknowledged, but it yields, it gives way at the last step, and as a result, all its ways are affected. A religion of salvation is a religion of compromise, accommodation. A God who guarantees the ultimate reign of good, said Nietzsche, is a god of weaklings, cosmopolitan, democratic, conciliatory, a sort of universal justice of the peace, paternal and plebian. Himself devoid of instincts, he kills instinct in his disciples: apart from a timorous hatred of reality which rises less and less to the passion of the great ascetics, there are no impulsive elements in the Christian scheme of life.

The same accusation is being repeated today in more sombre hues. Let us first of all dismiss the sort of outbidding of scenic argument introduced by this darkening of the philosophic palette. Nietzsche flung himself to the assault of the Christian universe, his hands streaming with the far-off gold of the super-man and the super-world; but

modern atheism is calvinistic; its churches are bare, its ministers approve the cold shudder: their glance is morose, and their tone too often whiney. Not unintentionally do we speak of them in religious terms. The antichristian opposition will soon cease to adopt the rationalist forms which have hitherto been obligatory. Already the first beginnings can be seen of an effort to give it —no longer scientific justification or an independent morality, for these have failed, but a complete religious form. The past two centuries attempted to live according to reason, but without success. They tasted of happiness without developing a taste for happiness. This century is definitely committing itself to the demoniacal, to possession, either divine or human or infernal. Observe even here and there attempts at a mysticism without God. Their frenzied proceedings remind one of the intoxication of the Renaissance. But this sort of naive blackmail of spiritual heroism, this asceticism and this occasional metaphysical contortionism recall yet older memories and, as it were, the infantile distemper of every religious genesis. Primitive Christianity, also, had its stylites and its gymnosophists: for them the desert was never arid enough and they challenged themselves to extravagance after extravagance, blazing, the while, with pure love. In that deliberate grimace which one sees on the face of contemporary agnosticism, in those heartrending, wordy despairs (which sometimes, unlike the wilderness of Egypt, rend more paper than heart), in those efforts to go one better in unlearning, in hardness, in loneliness, can one be sure that there is not an element of rhetoric, a certain amount of romanticism and an appreciable dose of that masochism which is denounced as the core of Christian illusion? We have no wish to detract from the manifestly real

ordeal suffered in some of these experiences of negation, but it is permissible to measure them against the common standard and to try them on the razor-edge of a criticism neither more nor less severe than that imposed by St. John of the Cross. Though the common behavior of Christians does indeed comprise a thousand forms of humbug, yet it has no monopoly of affectation. The monks of Nothing are wanting in dignity. Their Dark Night swarms with monsters, terrors and orgies. The saintliness of the most detached is irritable and capricious. One wonders if they are inaugurating a metaphysic, a spirituality, or merely a style: they are the eccentrics of atheism.

It would therefore be puerile to enter upon a competition in melodrama with Christianity. Christianity would play no part on such a noisy stage. Its position is beyond comedy, shadowed or joyous, beyond display. If the instinct of spiritual tranquillity draws it periodically towards semi-Pelagianism, it is none the less subject to the temptations of fanaticism. One wonders if the two maladies are not of a piece, and if the spiritual depression of a period as religiously poor on the whole as our own, is not the unhealthy breeding-ground of the attacks of negativism and of metaphysical sarcasm which disfigure its boldest witness. "I refuse to be happy" (to be saved) (G. Bataille). Adolescent sulks? A dubious taste for humiliation?<sup>2</sup> Sartre believes he recognizes the Christian sense of sin in this ambiguous attitude. We shall see presently that if the sense of sin does sometimes indirectly catch in and get mixed up with it, yet the sources are to be looked for much deeper.

<sup>2</sup> "Today I rejoice to be an object of disgust to the sole human being whom fate has linked with my life." Elsewhere: "the need to be broken." G. Bataille.

We must be nice at this critical point where courses will be set for years, perhaps for centuries. The very marked distance set by the militant wing of contemporary atheism between itself and the comfortable rationalism of its fathers represents, from certain points of view, an undeniable spiritual progress. Perhaps we are about to see a sort of philosophical surrealism happily sweep away the pretentious prose of the featureless optimism of the hygienists and the pedagogues and the engineers of the soul. One must hope it will not, like the other form of surrealism, lose itself in unavoidable negations. In any case, its direction must be retained. A similar clearance in regard to all its disreputable deviations—rationalist, sentimental, bourgeois and political—is incumbent upon contemporary Christianity. Must one risk the word and call for a jansenist awakening? One would take the risk had not jansenism elsewhere closed the contemporary religious consciousness to the sense of the divine generosity, and were it not, all things considered, a narrow bourgeois form of severity. In the scrupulous virtue with which the descendant of Nietzsche determines to keep on either side of himself the unfenced precipice of the Absurd, the sense of the absolute has set its mark. These knights in sombre clothing are marching no doubt to the abyss: they recall Christianity not to true perspectives but to the proper scale of present problems. What Christianity cannot allow is their persistent confounding of despair with the tragic sense.

**D**ESPAIR is an individual experience. The group experiences rage or discouragement; it does not despair. Despair is a repetition in infinite mode of the gesture which isolates, refuses or repels. It is luxury of negation; it is born of emptiness and it creates emptiness. Tragedy, on the contrary, is born of

profusion. The man who turns in upon himself drains away to despair by an undefined loss of substance. The committed man is enriched by the tragic quality, because the world in which he is committed is a shattered world whose fragments clash and jar and whose actions rend and tear each other. However painful experience of the tragic may be, it is an experience of fullness, and bears in its injured plenitude hope and the first promise of ultimate reconciliation.

*We seek different things even here aloft, ye and I. For I seek more security; on that account have I come to Zarathustra.*

*Ye, however, when I see what eyes ye make, it almost seemeth to me that ye seek more insecurity.*

*—More horror, more danger, more earthquake. Ye long (it almost seemeth so to me—forgive my presumption, ye higher men)*

*—Ye long for the worst and dangerouslest life, which frighteneth me most, —for the life of wild beasts, for forests, caves, steep mountains and labyrinthine gorges.*

*And it is not those who lead out of danger that please you best, but those who lead you away from all paths, the misleaders.*

This fierce and vagabond melancholy, this *bête intérieure* which devours the roads of the spirit for fear they may lead to some end, were contrasted by Zarathustra himself with courage, with the overflowing love of adventure and the fearless joy of the uncertain. Modern despair is never wholly stranger to religious anguish. But it consumes the dark passion which it borrows from religion in a sickness that is historically very localized and whose counterpart it would be impossible to find in the

Greek<sup>3</sup> or the Christian universe, or in the mystic nostalgia of the East, which, even in annihilation, is bathed in the sense of the universal presence. It is a narrow and sterile evil. Acting as his own executioner, modern man himself delivers the blows under which he groans.

Christianity is a stranger to this despair. Is it equally stranger to tragedy? More often than one likes to admit, one meets under the name of Christianity a code of moral and religious propriety whose chief concern seems to be to discourage outbursts of feeling, to fill up all chasms, to apologize for audacity, to do away with suffering, to bring down the appeals of the Infinite to the level of a domestic conversation, and to tame the anguish of our state. Who has not been, or may not be so trapped?

*Verily, neither do I like those who call everything good, and this world the best of all. Those do I call the all-satisfied.*

*All-satisfiedness, which knoweth how to taste everything,—that is not the best taste! I honour the refractory, fastidious tongues and stomachs, which have learned to say "I" and "Yea" and "Nay."*

*To chew and digest everything, however—that is the genuine swine-nature! Ever to say YE-A—that hath only the ass learnt, and those like it—*

*Deep yellow and hot red—so wanteth my taste—it mixeth with all colours. He, however, who whitewasheth his house, betrayeth unto me a whitewashed soul.*

The truth is that there is no tragic quality at once so unobtrusive and so tense as the catholic: the very elements which seem to set it at a distance from the tragic serve only to increase enormously its tragic situations. No other Christian confession goes to such lengths in its use of the spirit of synthesis, in

<sup>3</sup> Kierkegaard saw this clearly: v. *Either . . . Or*.

what one might call undemanding understanding of the world, patience with sinners and with history, understanding of the stages necessary and the inevitable approximations. Now if this spiritual condescension tends constantly towards an amalgamating of faith with the age, the rigid framework of catholicism controls it by two capital beliefs: the infinite transcendence of God and the profound universality of sin. The pathway of the catholic Christian here follows the line of a ridge, and he must walk with extreme precision in order to keep himself from sliding into either the idyllic Christianity of the Vicar of Savoy, or the desperate Christianity of Calvin or Jansenius. Too high a line, and this transcendent God escapes us altogether, and the tragic vanishes together with hope and the pathos of free commitment and the open future. Too low a line, and the deeply wounded universe of post-Adamic existence, torn in its inmost parts, but at the same time frothing liberty through all its wounds, and flooded with grace, becomes a world spiritually dead and passive beneath the divine decrees: the drama of life is further impoverished and tends towards the summary simplicity of a judicial process.

One may wonder if these two master-columns of the Christian edifice are always firmly in place. We are not yet free of the obsessions of those long-drawn-out anti-protestant and anti-jansenist polemics. Have we not, through our desire to safeguard the interior dialogue of man with God, the intimacy of grace, and thereby to save—let us not regret it—all the substance of Christian humanism and Christian joy and the power of the Incarnation—have we not sometimes in speech and in act mitigated the fruitful scandal of the transcendence? One sees bigoted fanatics handling and fingering divine things

with an indiscretion which turns one's stomach, pronouncing without difficulty upon the intentions of God and the mysteries of history. In theory, the theologians denounce these blasphemies: but do they always do justice to the Infinite? As the result of stressing the analogy of the created world and its Creator, the great central tradition of negative theology seems sometimes to be pushed to one side of the main highway of Christian thought. Now, not only is it the common language of all mystics, but it cuts a path into the very heart of the greatest philosophical effort which has ever been made to rationalize the Christian universe.<sup>4</sup> And if knowledge of God depends essentially upon a negative theology, must not the same be said not only of the created world, of the essences displayed to the eye of reason, but of every religious view of man and nature? Most of the problems we encounter in the world allow us no alternative but to hold on to "both ends of the chain," two truths lived to the point of actual certitude but whose future for ever escapes us here, and whose hiatus is itself a scandal to reason. Who is there who can boast of knowing the intimate connection with the Whole of any essential Christian truth? Bossuet's penetrating phrase recalls, in a less striking way, Kierkegaard's thought; that the spirit of man can live the truths of faith only when divided between affirmations contradic-

<sup>4</sup> E. Gilson (*Le Thomisme*, 4th ed., p. 150) emphasizes how much misunderstood the classic theologian of analogy very often is. Analogy, for St. Thomas, merely allows us to speak of God in a manner "not entirely equivocal". The God of St. Thomas, remarks M. Gilson, is much more inaccessible than the God of Aristotle who was already passably so. We indicate only his metaphysical situation, without being in any way able to conceive what he is, but only "what he is not, and what relationship exists between him and all that is not him". (St. Thomas, *Cont. Gent.* I, 30.)



tory to the first inspection of reason, and sustained in transcendence by the buttress of this contradiction. Periodically, in reaction against the moods of history, catholicism has to re-establish now the rights of man, now the rights of God; at one time the rights of lucidity, at another the rights of darkness. For two centuries an endeavour has been made to impose upon religious life an impassive reason and a sentimental facility. So sustained an effort has not failed to have an extremely depressing effect upon lived Christianity, but today religious sensibility is beginning to recover. It is becoming extremely attentive to agnosticism's share in the composition of faith. Perhaps it is even a misnomer to call its part a share, for its demands are as unbounded as the generous light shed by Grace through the darkness of the understanding and the senses.

This agnosticism *naturaliter christianus* cannot remain a pure attitude of thought. It informs the whole atmosphere of our spiritual life and insinuates into its very grain, so to speak, a disquieting mark of transcendence. Let no one quibble over the word. We are well aware that in one sense faith is no more agnostic than gnostic, but violent words are sometimes necessary to awake spirits slumbering in doctrinal equilibriums and objective balancings. Christian agnosticism has the face of the Christianity which carries it. Catholic, it shuts the door, not on every Christian philosophy, but on every Christian philosophical system; not on all certitude, but on any permanent dwelling within certitude; not on every Christian temporal order, but on every Christian temporal utopia; not on joy, but on happiness; not on peace, but on tranquillity; not on plenitude, but on satisfaction. It does not make of the Christian life a life substantially anguished, but

it insinuates a thorn of anguish into the heart of every blessedness, save only the last blessedness of all. No man knows if he is worthy of love or of hate: this fundamental ambiguity of the finite in regard to the infinite not only introduces into our spiritual outlook the ambiguity of conscience and the defeat of moralism, but the ambiguity of history and the confusion of providentialist planning; the ambiguity of action and the vanity of schemes and projects. No man knows by what prodigy of invention the Infinite may not tomorrow surprise him; to what paradox he may not be summoned.

One cannot conceive of the Christian life which did not carry in its heart this obscure and anxious waiting upon the Extraordinary. In a primitive consciousness it takes the debased forms of fear of God and holy terror, but as it becomes more refined it gives rise to more delicate feelings—spiritual discretion, or that "holy melancholy" that Hamann spoke of; but the substance remains the same. The idea of the Good God makes us nowadays forget the Great God, as it makes us forget the Beautiful God. This is a very modern form of myopia and one which derives from our manners. Simplicity is queen among us. We are no longer solemn as our fathers were. Public security (at least in normal times) leaves us virtually free from fear. So-called democratic customs do away with, among other things, artificial distances. But correspondingly our higher feelings, which come to terms with coarse symbolisms, are affected by the dying-down of elementary feelings. The world without terrors or distance or formality, to which the modern city accustoms us, does not induce us to remember that the adoration and the fear of God lie at the base of piety and give it its sublime force. The amiability of our social relations, which conceals the

dramas beneath the surface, is a bad school in which to learn the inescapable truth that the night of the senses and of the spirit is the necessary road towards the possession of that which, only at the end of the night, St. John of the Cross was to call "the satiety given by the Spirit of God."

However, even apart from the annihilations of the divine encounter, the world of the Christian experience admits of closer sources of anguish. Sin casts between ourselves and nature, between ourselves and men, between ourselves and ourselves, infinities of opacity that no immediate hope can penetrate. The Christian world is a broken world. When, then, have "the harmonies of nature," of pagan and mechanistic inspiration, derived the power to make the contemporary Christian consciousness forget centuries of cosmic dread and that shrouded sadness which veils its most beautiful songs? The mystery of a fault of which we know nothing sets us as strangers in nature, singular kings of a creation of which we are, more often than not, the bauble and the victim. For where, in fact, are this moody indifference to our fate, this universal conspiracy of things to make use of and to banalize our boldest efforts, and this domestic plotting by our body to introduce the perfidies of these same things into the very place it is charged to serve—where are these more crushingly felt than in a life which has been endowed with the thirst for love and universal reconciliation? Our solitude grows in proportion as we strive to be more faithful; incomprehension disconcerts good will far more grievously than bad; love is torn by perpetual misunderstandings and reprisals. An ocean of ignorance and indifference drowns us in the very midst of the passers-by on this pavement, of the members of this party, of the fragile

cell of that family; aggressiveness is everywhere, vigilant and swollen with self-importance. Is that all? No, paganism also achieved this level of misery and anguish. Crushed by the universe, blinded by destiny, just, yet persecuted—man has culminated in these three high places of our distress. But what he has not known is the interior cancer, the anguish of sin burning the very fibre of life everywhere where life refuses itself to the eternal transfiguration. Life is left no refuge, because the Divine Will desires it to superabound, and looses upon it heaven and hell. A hundred interior, little-known demons lacerate us; monotony, money-troubles, absurdity—those dreary goddesses tread at the heels of our best hours. Are we then only capable of talking symbolically and from a distance about that cross which is promised to spiritual exertion? Do we have to banish it from the details of daily life? The servant is not wiser than his master, and the last word of the Master, the last, on the verge of the consummation, was, as we too easily forget, a cry of desolation.

This tragic tension is greatest in the paradoxical perspective of the Incarnation. The duty of incarnation, if we were faithful to the meaning of the word, would oblige us to maintain simultaneously, at each moment of time, the most completely contradictory-to-good-sense positions; to die to the world, even while we committed ourselves to it; to deny the everyday, and to save it; to sorrow over our sins, and to rejoice in the new man; to reckon of value only what is inward, but to spread ourselves abroad throughout nature in order to conquer the whole of life for inwardness; to recognize in ourselves the dependence of a nothing and the liberty of a king; and above all never to regard any of these divided situations as substantially contradictory, nor as

finally resolvable in the experience of man.

What then is the origin of this constitutional Christian tranquillity and this upstart confidence? It will be said that the cosmic salvation which is at the end of the Christian time of waiting neutralizes in advance the vicissitudes of the way. It is a fact that it does too often encourage the believer to relax in the comfortable certainty of a sort of fortunate retreat. The catholic idea of Grace seems more inclined to this temptation than does any other religious disposition. A believer of calvinist, jansenist or barthian stock, for whom the sin of this world may be defeated but never done away with, and who maintains men, even the saint, in a position irresolvably rent between a never-lessening misery and an unaltering transcendence, is more inclined to keep a pathetic and practically heroic view of history and of the personal life. A catholic, for whom eternal life is already given intrinsically and vitally in this very world to whoever surrenders himself to the action of the Spirit, is too readily inclined to imagine the spiritual journey as a sort of progressive capitalization of grace, certainty and merit. But it means, in that case, that he can never have heeded the words of the great spiritual masters, and that he has stifled the voice of interior experience under a gross moralism. Spiritual time is not a continuous unfolding of consolation, a happy and spontaneous flowering. It beats in the category neither of happiness nor of progress. It is made up of violent leaps, of crises and nights, interrupted by rare moments of fullness and peace. It resembles more the poet's time than the time of the engineer. One might inscribe upon its pediment: through ambiguity to certitude; through desolation to joy; through darkness to light. At the

utmost end, the mystic will say: through the ordeal of the Nothing to the fullness of the All. The truth is, that to the eyes of abandoned reason, Faith is a wager, and that in the instant which opens us to Faith, in the interminably repeated instant which maintains us in Faith, there is a hazard more desperate than turning upside down in the Absurd—the leap, the infinite leap, from Non-being to Being.

Nothing, then, bears less resemblance than does Christianity to a system of explanation designed to make good breaches in metaphysics and to muffle the dissonances of experience. It is a principle of life, and if it is also a principle of truth, it is so in the life it communicates. The misconstructions put upon it are particularly induced, in the case of catholicism, by the conception held by non-catholics of the nature of dogma. It is judged of by its external appearance, and this exterior is too readily looked for in unfortunate scholastic expressions. Dogmatic formula localizes and encompasses mystery: it is concerned above all to say what it is not, and to uproot the distorting simplifications which continually mushroom around it. It does not destroy it as mystery, and above all it renders void neither the decision which leads to the first understanding of dogma, nor the chain of experience which leads the believer, by accepted risks, to the progressive and painful conquest of the light.<sup>5</sup> It is revealed only progressively to the Church, and it is permissible to believe that the development of dogma follows a sort of interior maturing of the universal Church and of its receptiveness towards the Holy Spirit. The protracted preparation it undergoes in

<sup>5</sup> The contrary belief is nevertheless common: did not Denis de Rougemont write (*Politique de la personne*, 93) that the "Roman system" provides the faithful with an enduring equilibrium even if faith disappears from it!

theological opinion and in the life of the Church imparts to the dogmatic formula a whole interior drama of its own, and it communicates this charge of life to whoever receives it as a living word and not as a dead letter. It is the heavy responsibility of books of theology and spirituality intended for the general public, as well as of sermons, that they annex this sacred history, misunderstand its rebirth in each one of us, and too often transform the call to adventure in the life of the Church into the recital of an inventory.

It remains to be seen if this manner of dozing beside the thread of fate, and of turning the human drama into a family outing and burning problems into a school exercise, is a monopoly of relaxed Christianity. There is a comfortable atheism, as there is a comfortable Christianity. They meet on the same swampy ground, and their collisions are the ruder for their awareness and irritable resentment of the weakening of their profound differences beneath the common kinship of their habits. The prospect of personal annihilation no more disturbs the contented sleep of the average *radical-socialiste* than does the horror of the divine transcendence or terror of reprobation disturb the spiritual digestions of the habitués of the midday Mass. Forgetfulness of these truisms is the reason why so many discussions are still hampered by naïve susceptibilities.

IF WE claim for the Christian experience a tragic capacity as great as or greater than that of the agnostic, we are refusing to sacrifice to that contemporary fashion which recognizes spiritual strength only under the lineaments of extreme stress, and demands saints who flex their muscles. The false idea apparent under this decadent view is the nietzschean one that the capacity to bear a world stripped of meaning is

the absolute measure of spiritual strength.

Christianity is not content with denying the monopoly of the tragic to this attitude of despair. Carrying tragedy to its heights, it refuses to allow the totality of the spiritual experience to be reduced to the tragic category. God does not loose his thunderbolts at every turn, like Zeus and Wotan. The seven Beatitudes are beatitudes of peace, a Gospel of springtime; and it is an enormous serenity that floods the Mass at its culminating point, at the approach of the communion. If the tone of the absolution of the dead is still terrifying, let us not forget that it has come to us through the age of the dance of death; it was, too, a desperate age, individualistic and decadent, very similar to our own politically and religiously. *Flecte quod est rigidum. Fove quod est frigidum.* Self-abandonment is situated on a level above the tragic tension, and Christian hope flowers on the far side of the mystic night. The absurd, for which there is such a manifest taste, is rather to wish to retain the night without the hope which gives it meaning. In the heart of Christianity, beyond the ascetic of paradox, anguish and annihilation, there is an ascetic of simplicity and generous readiness, of patience, faithful humility, sweetness and even, be it said, of weakness, supernatural weakness. There can be no disguising the opposition between this ascetic and the neo-stoicism previously described. The knight of life and the knight of faith do not inhabit the same universe.

The one is a universe of momentary passion, of a frantic vitality, self-squandering in the intoxicating morrowless plenitude of a short and violent impetus; or else of a finite and positive design. The other is a universe of the eternal incarnated, a universe which surrenders itself wholly in no one in-

stant of time, but only in each instant through all the others. Life in the eternal fires us more than any other, but it extinguishes excitement, moderates gesture, evens out impetuosity, sacrifices display to intensity and charm to continuity. It is not surprising if its effect at first appears to be enfeebling and flattering. The impression is justified. The passage from the natural life to the eternal is made, at every moment of time, as in the last hour, solely by way of the pallor of death. There is a colour and vigour of immediate life which is *really* lost before it is found again at the far end of spiritual liberty. There is a *real* initial impoverishment of our humanity by the Faith. And for many this languor is a luxury they prolong. It is, alas, all too true that it is often easier to give way to death than to live again; that often we become bogged in the first stages of the spiritual life and abandon the scintillating life of the moment only for the stagnant waters of formalism and the spirit of bigotry. Whoever looks at us from out of the singing fullness of the blessed moments of paganism—these also rare; let us not be deceived by stylizations—cannot fail, at such moments, to find our faces, the faces of uninvolved Chris-

tians, ugly. And this will be true not only of dead Christians. The expression is transfigured less quickly than the heart, and many ardent religions have a wretched appearance in the world.

Having said which, it is none the less true that, if the virtues appear drab in the eyes of the age through the fault of virtuous people (*Do I reject your virtues? I reject your virtuous people*), yet they are so also because the eternal is colourless to anyone who presumes to look at it without borrowing its light. The man who lives for the secret, piquant and delicious enjoyment of the instant is not unaware of the spiritual life, as many gloomy moralists claim; but he knows only the down upon it, the "interesting," the humanly picturesque. It was Kierkegaard who observed that the knight of faith often presented the man of the world with the scandal, not of the extraordinary but of the unrelievedly bourgeois, as if the marvelous Christian, like the fairies in the tales, loved to test the quality of our hearts by a modest appearance. His splendours are visible only to his peers. His strength laughs at strength. *Who will then appear as the most strong? The most moderate, those who have no need of extreme beliefs.*



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# "THE IMAGE OF GOD" AND THE EPIC OF MAN

PAUL RICOEUR

## Towards an "epical" theology

WHEN the theologians of the sacerdotal school elaborated the doctrine of man's essence as summarized in the stupendous expression of the first chapter of Genesis—"Let us make man in our image, and in our likeness"—they certainly did not master at once all its implicit wealth of meaning. It is the task of each century to elaborate its theological thought ever anew on the basis of that indestructible symbol which henceforth belongs to the immutable treasury of the biblical canon. Let us begin, therefore, with the most grandiose interpretation given to it by some of the Greek and Latin fathers even before the time of Origen and Augustine: it will immediately disrupt the narrow interpretation that we are prone to give to the metaphor when we follow the most facile direction of its meaning.

We are quite ready to believe that

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the image of God is simply an imprint or stamp, like the worker's trademark; we then discuss among ourselves in order to know whether, in the economy of sin, this mark has been erased, to a greater or lesser degree, or perhaps *in toto*. But what might be offered to our reflection if we should invert the metaphor, if we should see the image of God not as an hereditary mark, but as the root of human creativity; if we should treat it not as the residual trace of a craftsman who has abandoned his work to the ravages of time, but as a continuous act in the creative movement of history and duration?

Another question: where do we most readily seek out this imprint left in us? In the very essence of the individual, in terms of its quality as a *subject*; the image of God, we believe, is the very personal and solitary power to think and to choose; it is interiority. In such an atomistic interpretation of the image of God, I am an image of God, you are an image of God, but history is a fact which cannot be coordinated with this divine stamp, which is passive, ever immutable, ever subjective.

NOW let us listen to the voices of the Fathers of the Church: for them the image of God is Man, indivisibly collective and individual; it is man, drawn forward by a progressive expansion of his nature, and oriented toward the vision of God, even to the manifestation of the figure of the Son. Listen to Irenaeus: "It was first necessary that man should be; then, once existing, that he should grow; having been created, it was necessary for him to become an

adult; having once become an adult, that he should multiply; having multiplied, that he should acquire strength; have taken strength, that he should be glorified; and having been glorified that he should see the Lord." And again: "It was first necessary that nature should appear, and that what was mortal should be vanquished and absorbed by what is immortal, and that man should become as the image and likeness of God, having acquired the knowledge of good and evil." We should try to measure the revolution in the history of thought which this text represents in relation to that neo-platonism in which reality was a progressive withdrawal, an ineluctable beclouding; in it we descend from the One, who is formless, to the Mind, which is bodiless, to the World Soul and individual soul which are plunged in matter, which is, itself, absolute darkness. Are we able to gauge the distance between this text and any concept of salvation which conceives of salvation as the individual recording of isolated members of the elect, torn from an indifferent or evil historical process which, in any case, is foreign to the idea of the coming of the image of God?

Here we have, in the face of the ancients and of the men of our times, the primordial Christian philosophy of the image of God: that of a creation in time which is advanced by the coming to birth of a being both individual and communal, scarcely inferior to a god.

Of course, I am aware of the qualifications, which must at once "tone down" and "correct" this vision of historical creation, if it is to account properly for evil, and for the height, breadth and depth of grace. But I insist that we understand clearly that evil is not something to be cut away from, and grace something to be added to the historical creation of man, but that crea-

tion continues precisely in the midst of evil and by means of grace. It is precisely that which the Fathers understood: that creation is not inert, finished and closed: "My father," says Jesus, "is at work even to this hour." Evil is not to be cut out of creation, nor is grace to be added to it; our idea of creation must rather be enriched to the degree that it will encompass both the inclination of evil, and the gratuitousness of grace. The grandiose divine pedagogy as conceived by the Fathers consists in drawing forth a god from a sinner. In the words of Irenaeus: "How could man have known good if he had been ignorant of the contrary of good? And how shall that man be god who has not yet been man?" If Irenaeus and Tertullian included evil and grace in a vision of creation, it is because Christ was for them the pinnacle of achievement, in the creation of man, from evil to grace; the point from which creation would be launched anew, the renewal of the image of God. Let us take one last quote from Irenaeus: "Because of His immense love for us He became what we are so that He might make us become what He is Himself."

Such is the vast fresco that I wished to place before you, in order to give tone, measure and proportion to our meditation. It moves us neither to an active pessimism, nor to a tragic optimism—which, in reality, are the same thing—but to an epical sense of our personal existence situated anew in the perspective of a much vaster epic of mankind and of the act of creation.

**B**UT we must now ask: how is this reflection on "the image of God" able to help us orientate ourselves in all our encounters involving ourselves and our fellow man?

There is a possible avenue of approach: several years ago, in an essay

entitled "The *Socius* and the Neighbor," I attempted to juxtapose the "short-term" relationships between man and man (the relations with one's neighbor) with the "long-term" relations lived out in terms of institutions and the social *mechanism* (the relations with the *Socius*). Our reflections on the image of God allow us to take as a point of departure what was then our conclusion, namely the deep and mysterious unity among all these relationships subsumed under the sign of a theology of love which would at the same time be a theology of history.

The Fathers knew that Man is, simultaneously and indivisibly, the individual, man, and the collectivity, Man: Man is each man and all mankind. There were some among them who knew that Adam meant man, Anthropos, not an individual old gentleman, all alone with his wife in a garden, who, by means of physical generation, would transmit his very individual and personal penchant to evil to his descendants; they were still capable of conceiving a *singular-collective*, an individual who had the value of a whole nation, a *collectivity* which was convertible into individual thoughts, volitions and feelings.

They continued to comprehend this paradox because they had preserved the historical and cosmic dimensions of the image of God.

How can we not stand in wonder, we men of today, who are threatened as never before with seeing our human nature split in two between the short-term relationships of friendship, of the couple, and of our private lives on the one hand, and of the long-term relationships of the economic, social and political life? This dichotomy between the private and public life of man, which makes a madness of both, is the very contradiction of an anthropology drawn

from a meditation on the image of God.

In order to make somewhat clearer what is false in the contemporary opposition of the individual and the "big animal"—in the words of Simone Weil—I shall take a simple example: that of language. It is a good example, since the Lord consents to be called the Logos and, according to Scripture, creation proceeds by the Word. Now, how do we experience the fact of language? Language is not an entirely individualized human reality; no one invents language; its sources of diffusion and evolution are not individualized; and yet, what is more human than language? Man is man because he speaks: on the one hand, language exists only because each man speaks; but language exists also as an institution within which we are born and die. Is this not the sign that Man is not entirely individualized; but is both individual and collectivity?

If we follow this path, which has been opened to us through our initial reflection on the image of God, we must resist accepting the dichotomy to which our daily experience frequently inclines us, between the neighbor and the *socius*, between relationships that are close at hand, and those that *extend beyond our immediate being*. Rather than allow ourselves to be entranced by this dichotomy, we shall strive to traverse those spheres of human relations which can, each in turn, be experienced either in a very personal or a very anonymous manner.

I PROPOSE to follow a convenient and instructive order of presentation which is at the same time in accord with the most natural and enduring expressions of man's reality and history: we shall distinguish between the relationships existing in the spheres of possession, power, and value (*avoir, pouvoir, valoir*). This division has been suggested to me by Kant's *Anthropology from*

a *Pragmatic Point of View*, which has the advantage of placing us at the very center of highly individualized feelings and passions: the passions of having, of dominating, and of displaying (*Habsucht, Herrschsucht, Ehrsucht*). It also centers us within three very important institutionalized spheres having to do with the relations of man to man: the economic sphere of possession, the political sphere of power and the cultural sphere of mutual recognition.

The first sphere is determined by the relationship of work to ownership; the second, by the relationship between the act of commanding and the act of obeying (or, if you will, between the governing and the governed, the political relationship, *par excellence*). The third sphere also can find an objective correlative in morals, codes, moments, works of art, and culture. Through their dual participation in the emotional world of the individual and the institutional world of the collectivity, possession, power, and value escape the clash between the neighbor and the *socius*, and the dichotomy between relationships that are proximate, and those that are long-term: the same set of situations is experienced both on an interpersonal level and within the framework of economic, political and cultural institutions and organizations.

I would now like to suggest what the epic of the image of God unfolded might be when, in the three registers of possession, of power and of value, we take into account the incessant interrelations of the private and public orders. I am going to offer you a vast general sketch, divided into two diptychs. On the first we shall perceive the failure of possession, of power and of value. On the second we shall witness the work of redemption, the divine pedagogy working both within, and in terms of the economic, political and

cultural context, interlocking individual perspectives and the life of groups with their structures and institutions.

### The Failure of Possession Power, and Values

THAT evil passes both through the individual and the collectivity is suggested by our earlier example of language. The myth of Babel is the myth of the destruction of languages as an instrument of communication. Language is stricken as an individual power by the lie, gossip, flattery and education; as an institution by the dispersion of languages and by misunderstanding on the different levels of cultural groupings, nations, social classes, and environments. We have here an example which encourages us to pursue boldly an analysis of the realm of possession, of power and of value, without allowing ourselves to be disturbed by the antinomy between individual and collective sin. Man is evil not only in his "heart," but also in the non-personalized part of his humanity, the diverse collectivities which are like the interstitial stuff of his humanity.

Let us begin with *the evil of having*.

In itself having is not evil. It is the relation of the primordial Adam with the land that he cultivates; it is the familiar relationship of appropriation by which the *I* is extended into the *mine*, on which it depends, which it humanizes and out of which it makes its sphere of dependence. But although possession is innocent in itself, it is one of the greatest stumbling blocks in existence.

There is a curse attached to possessing which we perceive on the collective as well as the individual level. The moralists have sufficiently reminded us that in identifying myself with what I have, I am possessed by my possessions, I actually lose my autonomy. That is



why the rich young man must sell all his possessions in order to follow Christ. "Woe to the rich" thunders the Christ of the Gospels. The misery of the hard-hearted man is that his attitude presents an immediate obstacle to communication. *Mine* excludes all third parties, and thus individual men in appropriating to themselves goods and things, appropriate themselves. It is as a result of this that we represent human lives as isolated one from each other. But at bottom they are linked to one another by a thousand bonds of similarity, communication, attachment to tasks, by all that is expressed by "we." It is their zones of possession which are mutually exclusive and which separate men from each other.

But this personal and interpersonal misfortune also has a communal dimension. There can only be possession within an established order of property. It is here that we can learn from Marx, without wanting in any way to conform to Marxist orthodoxy. At a time when the Protestant Revival was forgetting social structures and was concentrating on individual conversion. Marx's special greatness was in not being a moralist. All our efforts to make him one will simply result in our losing the benefits of his analysis. His greatness lies in having attempted to describe and to explain alienation—that is, a retrogression of human nature back to the inhuman—on the level of social structures; the book that he wrote was entitled not *The Capitalist*, but *Capital*.

Certainly capital involves the abolition of humanity, in which it is made into a thing; capital is the great fetish in terms of which mankind has been dehumanized. From that point of view, Marxism is true. In a world dominated by the category of money, the thought and the word are only variations of the fetish: materialism is the truth of a

world without any truth. False as a dogmatism—first there was matter, then came life, then man, finally communist man will emerge—this materialism is true as a phenomenology of the untrue. Whatever might be thought of the remainder of Marxist theory,—its theory of classes, the proletariat as the universal class, and the dictatorship of the proletariat—the flower of its crown will remain the theory of alienation. The great value of this theory has been to restore to us a vision of evil, not on the level of the moral or immoral individual, but in terms of institutions of ownership. In this way we may rediscover the historical dimension of sin, of which the prophets were so well aware, and recognize that sin, for whose beginning no individual is responsible, but which we all perpetuate, in which we are involved without having to reinvent it personally. In simply being born I enter into certain relationships of possession which are already corrupt on the collective level, although their corruption may be constantly intensified by individual acts of appropriation and exploitation which are morally scandalous.

What we have just said about the sphere of having can also be said of the sphere of power. Power is the fundamental structure of the political order. It involves the entire spectrum of relations between the governing and the governed. Even in the limited situation of a self-governing community, functioning without the interposition or delegation of power, a distinction would continue to exist between commanding and obeying. It is by passing through the stage of a limitless power, unrestricted in its ability to compel and constrain physically, that a historical community is organized into a State and becomes capable of making a decision.

Now, what relationship is more frag-

ile than this one? Power establishes between men an unequal, non-reciprocal, hierarchical and non-fraternal communication. And yet this is a fundamental relationship, the very foundation stone of human history. It is through the exercise of power that man makes history. It is therefore the same relationship which, in the proper meaning of the word, establishes man and, in the same moment, has always led him astray. We know the complaints of the wise against the great and mighty; the Old Testament abounds in the violent criticisms of kings; the *Magnificat* announces the humbling of the great and the exaltation of the meek; Jesus himself recalls that "the rulers of the nations enslave them." The Greek tragedians recognized the same problem: Oedipus, Creon and Agamemnon are examples of a haughty grandeur brought low. Alain sums up this whole idea: "Power renders men mad."

Now the passion for power has this remarkable quality: it does not aim at happiness; the true love of power has something ascetical about it. For the man intoxicated with power, it is worth the sacrifices of personal happiness.

Is this to say that a meditation on power exhausts itself in a purely moral meditation on the passion of power and the means for correcting and even uprooting it? Anyone can perceive that our thought would be in a sense short-changed if it allowed itself to be restricted to a consideration of how the individual uses power. The problem of the "tyrant" is only a projection of the problem of "power." There is a pathological aspect to power which is not reducible to the bad faith of individuals, to the violent nature of the Prince, and to the cowardice of his subjects. The violence of one man and the cowardice of all conspire within one unique vicious symbol, a single culpable entity which

together they engender and maintain, but which, in return, is moulded by the tyrant and his humiliated neighbor.

It is this image of power, this alienated form, which is worthy of special reflection. St. Paul speaks thus, in a mythological sense, of authorities as demoniacal powers; so does St. John with his "Beast" of the Apocalypse. Mythical language is the most faithful way to evoke that power which is without law, which is unshared, without control or lawful procedure, or to describe the seductive enticements with which it garbs its violence. It is mythical language which best preserves the power of revelation contained in the image of God. It makes manifest the fact that man's essence has been degraded not only in individuals but in the collectivity that is Mankind. There are infamous laws, there are criminal laws. Evil legislation is always the necessary outgrowth of the evil passions of an individual, a group or a class in power. For example, it is useless at present to denounce in moralistic terms the tortures occasioned by the Algerian war—as if a dirty war could be made respectable—if we do not at the same time denounce the special interests, the voting of special powers, and finally the war itself insofar as it has become a sort of institution destined to continue the relationship of colonizer to colonized.

In this area the Christian has everything to learn from the critique of power developed by classical liberal thought from Locke to Montesquieu, by the anarchist thought of Bakunin, the defenders of the *Commune*, and the non-Stalinist Marxists. I am thinking in particular of the group *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, which has committed itself to analyse the structure of power in planned societies in the twentieth century, and to pose in precise terms the problem of management by the workers, direct

democracy in small economic entities, and the structuring of political authority from bottom to top—and not just from top to bottom, as in the authoritarian democracies of the East, and even the West.

These examples suggest the notion of continuity between a theological anthropology inspired by the patristic interpretation of the image of God, and a concrete critique of power, adjusted to the reality of our day. Because of its scope, this theological vision of the image of God ought to be able to reintegrate the scattered parts of a critique of historical and political man which historical Christendom left to be developed outside its own narrow individualistic conception.

**W**ILL the encounter between man and man in the third cycle of relationships be more exclusively personalized than in the two preceding cycles? We tend to think so. What is at stake here? It is that quest which each of us is pursuing, the quest for the respect of our neighbor which is essential to the consolidation of our personal existence. For we exist to a degree by virtue of the recognition we receive from others, who give us our value, who approve or disapprove of us, and who reflect the image of our own worth. The constitution of a human subject is a mutual act by way of opinion, appreciation, and recognition. Others give meaning to me by throwing back to me the trembling image of myself.

Now, what is more fragile than this reflected existence? This relationship of mutual recognition is quickly perverted by all the passions of vanity, pretense, and jealousy. The moralist, the novelist, the dramatist are here invaluable witnesses of men's struggles for the reflected "image" of themselves. Here we have an interpersonal relationship of the first order, massacred by evils and

vices which touch the "sinews and nerves" of individual men.

This is true. But this same struggle for recognition is carried on by means of cultural realities which doubtlessly do not have the coherence of economic apparatuses or political institutions, but which nevertheless form an objective reality, in the sense that Hegel intended in speaking of objective spirit. It is through images of man that this quest of mutual appreciation is pursued. And these images of man make up the reality that is culture. I understand by this customs, morals, law, literature, the arts. And this multitude of images of man conveyed by culture is incorporated in its monuments, its style, and its artifacts. When I go to a Van Gogh exposition, I am face to face with a vision of the world which has taken form in an artifact, a thing, a work of art, a vehicle of communication. Even when it is not a human image which is represented, what is conveyed still remains a human representation. For the image of man is not only the portrait of man, it is also the sum total of the projection of the face of man on things—in this sense, a still-life is an image of man.

Now these images of men are incorporated in our interpersonal relationships. They are silent means of mediation which interject and insert themselves between the looks which two human beings exchange. We see one another through the images of man. With such meanings culture comes to ballast these relationships which we believe the most direct and immediate.

It is obvious that if our encounters are mediated by the images of man which are incorporated in works of art, interhuman relations can be lowered to the level of these mediating images. This is what happens when an aesthetic or literary movement destroys or perverts the fundamental representations

that man makes of himself—on the level of his sexual life, his daily work or his leisure. It could even be said that we have here a fundamental trouble-source of interhuman relations. Perhaps literature and the arts have a permanent function of scandalizing. By representing evil with insistence, the artist tears aside the conventional and hypocritical image which the righteous tend to form of themselves; hence the artist is always accused of perverting man by degrading the image of man. It is indeed necessary that his role remain an ambiguous one, insofar as he must be at once a master of truth and a master of seduction. But you see at the same time that a reflection on the fallen aspects of interhuman relationships cannot leave aside this drama and crisis which is being played out on the level of cultural representations, of collective phantasms and aesthetic media. Man always makes and unmakes himself in the heart of every other man, but also through the intervention of all those objects which sustain the relationship of man with man, from the economic to the cultural, passing through the political.

### The Élan of Redemption

LET US now examine the other panel of the diptych, on which is written in letters of fire and joy the word "redemption." The Greek Fathers were accustomed to read this as divinization. Let it be said at the very outset that the second panel is not simply a refutation of the first. Several years ago, in commenting on *Romans* 5 (12-21), Karl Barth accentuated a decisive expression of St. Paul: "If the sin of a single man brought death to us all, *by all the more reason* has the grace of God and the gift of this grace coming from one alone—Christ Jesus—abounded for us all." And still further: "If through the fault of one man and the deed of this one

alone Death has reigned, *how much the more* shall they reign in life, who have received through the deed of Christ Jesus alone the grace and the gift of justice in their full abundance." *By all the more reason, how much the more.* There is the divine measure, there is the divine transcendence of all measure; if sin abounds, grace superabounds.

Do we live up to this understanding? Do we know how to seek out the *superabundance* of grace which is God's answer to the *abundance* of Evil? Oh, of course, we know the orthodox answer: this superabundance is Jesus Christ; but what signs of this do we discern in this vast world? We do not dare to seek out these signs of a superabundance except in the interior experience of an abundant growth in joy, peace and conviction. It is our conviction that sin abounds in the external world, but that grace can superabound only in the interior of man. Are there to be no signs of the superabundance of grace except of the interior life or in a few communities living in refuge from the world; no signs of this on the great stage of the world? It must be admitted that, as early as Augustine, the dichotomy was already established; the dominant theological school asserted that sin was perhaps collective, but grace was certainly private and interior. The city of God is only recruited from the midst of the *massa perdit*a, the *massa iniquitatis, irae, mortis, perditionis, damnationis, offensionis—massa tota vitiata, damnable, damnata*. Only the Church emerges and survives from this compact mass of the damned as a "body" of salvation.

I understand very well there is some difficulty in speaking of salvation for a collective reality and *I wish to attack the problem directly without disguising in any way the difficulty of the enterprise*. Salvation, we say quite justly,

comes about through the remission of sin; is it possible to declare the remission of sins to an anonymous reality and could this reality be able to recognize it? The question is perplexing and I frankly hesitate: it is only by feeling my way and with the sense of embarking on an adventure that I shall try to develop this thought.

I ask myself the following: are we sure that we understand thoroughly the full scope of the remission of sins? Have we not restricted its very concept by our atomistic idea of salvation? The immense vision of the Greek Fathers on the growth of mankind which God orients, in the midst of evil and by means of Grace, toward divinization—does it not inspire us to allow our individualistic conception of the remission of sins to explode and expand, parallel with our conception of sin itself?

LET US try to recognize the signs of this remission of sins in a non-moralistic sense of the word, which I would call architectonic and which would be in the measure of the *imago Dei* taken in all its fullness. We will not follow our earlier order of economic, political and cultural, but take the political sphere as a point of departure. Indeed, we have the opportunity here of finding scriptural support in the Pauline teaching on government; from that perspective perhaps we can also try to say something about the other spheres of human relations.

Saint Paul develops a theory of government in *Romans* 13, of which one aspect is here significant: it is through its institutional, and not its personal character, that authority is said to come from God.

All authority is constituted, is instituted by God: to resist authority is to resist the order which God has established. "The ruler is the Minister of God

for thy benefit"; it is to his function that our respect is due. All these words: institution, order, good, function, exist on that level which we called earlier the human collectivity. What does this mean? Does it mean that Genghis Khan, Napoleon, Hitler, and Stalin have been invested with divine right by some sort of mysterious election? No, it means, I believe, that where the State is the State, in the midst of or even in spite of the evil of the titular authority, something is functioning for the benefit of man. I am taking this good credited to the state as a wager. It is the wager that, in the total perspective, in the midst of and in spite of the evil of the individuals in power, the State is good. We must admit that Saint Paul has won his wager; empires, in spite of their deeds of violence, have been the occasion for the advancement of law, knowledge, culture, the well-being of men and of art. Mankind has not only survived, it has also grown—more mature, more adult, more responsible—in a manner which is hidden to us, and will remain hidden until, in the heavenly Jerusalem, the violent pedagogy of the ruler with his sword shall be incorporated into the pedagogy of divine love. Let us not forget that Chapter 13 is inserted between two hymns dedicated to reciprocal love; this proves that St. Paul is not perplexed by the distinction between personal and public relations: "Do not render to anyone evil for evil," he says in the preceding chapter. After the paragraph on the state, he takes up this theme again: "Love in no way does evil to our neighbor, love is then the fulfillment of the law." Therefore the Pauline theory of government is inserted between two appeals to fraternal love. This is not without paradox. For civil authority, in contradistinction to the commandment of love, renders evil when it punishes. How can we under-



stand that it is the same economy of redemption which is unfolded through these two pedagogies? We live in the very rendering of these two pedagogies.

It can be objected that the Pauline teaching on authority scarcely invites a seeking out of the signs of redemption on the level of historical communities, since authority does not bear the mark of fraternal love. The theology of the reformed Churches has more often preferred to speak of the political sphere as the order of conservation rather than the order of redemption. But what is gained by such a distinction? Mankind is not only preserved, it is elevated, established and educated through the medium of the political sphere. If this education falls outside the order of redemption, what does it have to do with the Gospel and why does Paul speak of it? And if redemption should leave outside its scope the active history of men—which is, in part, the acts of the political sphere—does not redemption itself become abstract and unreal?

Three observations will permit us perhaps to attenuate the disparity between redemption, in the sense that its distinctive mark is brotherly love, and that type of human pedagogy which the Apostle says was instituted by God for our good. We are reluctant to speak about redemption on the level of the political development of mankind, because we have lost one of the fundamental meanings of the act of redemption—the growth of humanity, its achievement of maturity, its arrival at adulthood. "One must be made man in order to be made god," said Irenaeus, But the most secular institution and the least ecclesiastical authority, if it be just—if it be in conformity with its function, as St. Paul says—cooperates in this growth; in a sense, it is one of the paths of collective redemption for men. Kant himself still realized something

which the post-Augustinian theologian rarely understands—(*Idea of a Universal History from the Cosmopolitical Point of view*, fifth Proposition): "The means which nature employs to bring to a good end the development of all its proclivities is their *antagonism* within the very bosom of society, provided that, in the final analysis, this very antagonism be the cause of a regular ordering of this society."

Is not this "unsocial sociability," which becomes the instrument of civil society, a laicized expression of the theology of the Fathers? And is it not *right* that this expression has been laicized, if it is true that redemption adopts the tortuous path of the institutions of authority established by God, not when they are clerical in nature, but when they are just.

Secondly, the pedagogy of force that belongs to the magistrate is attached to the *ordo amoris*, the fraternal order of love, through the tenuous strand of the image of Utopia. In fact, the notion of Utopia has a very great theological significance: it is one of the devious paths of hope, one of the indirect paths on which the humanization of man is pursued in view of an ultimate divinization. There is a value in the notion of Utopia today, at a time when society has many means and few ends. I am thinking particularly of the Utopianism of the withering away of the state, as found among the great liberals, the anarchists, the defenders of the *Commune*, and the Lenin of *Revolution and the State*. It is by means of a Utopian notion of the end of the State—at least of the repressive state such as we know in our day—that we dream of the reconciliation of the spheres of politics and love. Indeed, we are dreaming of a State which would only be the administrator of affairs and the educator

of men toward the achievement of freedom.

This notion of Utopia is necessary for the very destiny of the political order. It gives the political order its aim, its tension, and, if I may use the term, its hope. I recognize my Gospel in the "anarchist" who preaches the dissolution of the coercive state. It is my Gospel, which has fallen out of my hands and has been taken up by a man who does not know that he is confessing Jesus Christ. Is it not under the sign of the notion of Utopia that we must read Saint Paul himself? "The magistrate is the minister of God for thy good." What state can be a minister for my good before the coming of the State which is universal, peaceful, and the educator of men? No existing State can satisfy the notion of Utopia, but it gives meaning and direction to them all.

Thirdly, the chasm between the pedagogy of violence and the pedagogy of fraternal love is not only diminished by means of Utopia, which actually carries the sign of reconciliation beyond history, but also by those men who in bearing witness to non-violence, have marked our own times with its sign. I am thinking expressly of Gandhi, of non-violent forms of action taken by the American Negro, and of the various expressions of non-violence in Europe. What does the man of non-violence do? At first sight, he seeks to exclude himself from the sphere of politics, because he disobeys authority; but in reality, in the depths of things, it is he who saves the State by recalling to those in authority that the State exists only to lead men to equality and to liberty. Non-violence is the hope of the State, a hope experienced in season and out of season. It is untimely hope, in the proper meaning of the word. Actually, the means of the non-violent man are those means granted ahead of time to the legitimate ends

of every State, including the State which rules by violence. It is by these means that the man of non-violence announces to the State of force its participation in the redemption, that is to say, its establishment for the good of men.

These are a few observations which perhaps will enable us to understand in what sense human magistrates are organs of redemption, of the great redemption which is pursued not only through the channel of brotherly love, but also by the path of the "big animal."

I had proposed to speak of redemption in the three spheres of possession, authority and value. But I have not followed this order: I have attempted a break-through on the political level and I have sketched the theme of corporate redemption through the medium of institutions which, we dare to say with St. Paul, have been established by God.

CAN we not find analogous forms of redemption in the economic and cultural order, which in some degree form a framework to the political sphere? There is a need, therefore, to elaborate and generalize this notion of institution in such a way as to have it encompass the full field of stable and enduring mediations, from tools to works of art, by which men communicate among themselves.

It is easy to extend our reflections from the political to the economic sphere: we have already stated that the relationship of man to his possessions only exists within a system of ownership and an organization of economic power. Scripture itself gives a very specific aspiration to a full mastery of nature:

When I look up to the heavens which Thy hands have made, the moon and the stars which Thou hast formed,

What is man that Thou art mindful of him or the son of man that Thou visitest him?

Thou hast made him only a little less than the angels, and hast crowned him with majesty and honor;

Thou hast given him dominion over the works of Thy hands,

Putting all things beneath his feet—sheep and oxen, all of them, even the wild beasts of the field,

The birds of the air and the fishes of the sea, everything that goes by the paths of the deep.

(Psalm 8: 4-9)

Dominion over things is thus one of the means of access to maturity, and to that degree, one of the expressions of the image of God. Today we know that this dominion is established through the organization of labor, economic planning and all the "established" forms of economic power. Therefore, it is not only the personal relationship of the individual with his possessions, but the totality of economic institutions which has been called to redemption. It is therefore to this established whole that we must attempt to apply our earlier observations, which were limited to the realm of power.

First, we must note that the full meaning of the notion of civil authority only appears when it is separated from its purely repressive and penalizing function. Today we are more aware that the repressive function of authority manifests an order only as "established order," which is to say, "established disorder." Institutions are only a sign of the Eternal Kingdom in so far as they are building the human community. Punishment only serves to preserve an already established order. It is in some sense the buttress of the established institution, its reaction against the "evildoers," who carry to some degree the germs of more just and more brotherly institutions to come. This is why, in widening the notion of the political in-

stitution to the dimensions of the social and the economic, we are not only emphasizing the human significance of justice, but the theological meaning of the institution. The development of the modern State is, in this respect, like a living and concrete exegesis of the Pauline notion of institution.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand what we have said of the function of the notion of Utopia as a purely human, reasonable and civil expression of hope finds here, not only an essential application, but also a very concrete base of support. The purely political utopian notion of the disintegration of the repressive State is a purely abstract Utopia, so long as it is not coordinated with a Utopia in which work was no longer alienated. This is the Utopia *par excellence*, the one which is the answer to the curse of having, the curse of that avarice which separates men. For it is in terms of wealth—material, intellectual, or spiritual wealth—that all curses are expressed: "Woe to the rich." All blessings ought to find their projection in the same register. What can this mean, if not a revolution which overturns the relationships of expropriation and mutual exclusion established by property? The reappropriation of the essence of man, now lost in the fact of having—or what comes to be the same thing, the reconciliation of men who are now separated by the fact of ownership—is, along with the Utopia of the disintegration of the State, the Utopia governing all economic thought anxious to manifest the signs of the Kingdom which is to come.

To continue the parallel with redemption by means of civil authority, we must say that non-violence on the political plane has its complement in Franciscan poverty. Does not Franciscan poverty announce in an intemperate manner—out of season certainly with respect to every reasonable and

ordered economy—the end of the curse which is attached to the private and selfish appropriation of goods, an act which generates hard-heartedness and solitude? Doesn't a wide and generous vision of the redemption teach us to read some signs of the Kingdom to come in the most absurd endeavors connected with the destruction of the Monster of capitalism and the Leviathan of the State?

I AM PROCEEDING timidly on paths which are perilous, and I would ask you whether it is hope which calls us forward or the seductive power of the world. . . . Perhaps some pearls of hope have been misplaced in the straw of false hopes.

It is harder to be concrete in speaking of "institutions" in regard to culture. Nevertheless, the deeper meaning of the institution appears only when it is extended to the images of man in culture, literature and the arts. These images have, in effect, been constituted or established. They have a persistence and a history proper to themselves which transcends the chance happenings of the individual person. Their structure demands a psychology of the imagination which would concentrate on the thematic content of these images of man, their lines of force and their evolution. It is in this sense that culture is established even in the tradition of the imaginary. It is therefore on this level also that we must seek the signs of the Kingdom to come.

The imagination has a metaphysical function which we are not able to reduce to a simple projection of vital, unconscious or repressed desires. The imagination has a function of projection and exploration in regard to that which is still possible to man. It is *par excellence* the institution and the constitution of the humanly possible. It is in imagining his potentialities that man

exercises prophecy with respect to his own existence. We can then begin to understand in what sense we can speak of a redemption through imagination: it is in the midst of dreams of innocence and reconciliation that hope works the very dough of the human. In the fullest meaning of the term, the images of reconciliation are myths, not in the positivistic sense of legend or fable, but in the phenomenological sense of religion, in the sense of being significant tales of the destiny of the whole human race. *Mythos* means word; the imagination, insofar as it is a mythopoetic function, is also the seat of a profound laboring which controls the decisive changes in our vision of the world. Every real conversion is first a revolution on the level of our directive images. By changing his imagination, man changes his existence.

A few examples taken from literature and the arts will make these revolutions in depth understandable. I mentioned before that man can be perverted in terms of the images which he creates of himself. I called attention on that occasion to the function of scandal in literature and sometimes in the plastic arts, and the ambiguity which is seductive and which yet claims to be true. Let me now say that the signs of redemption are not always to be sought in the contrary of scandal; it is often-times through scandal that salvation is announced. It is under the most destructive appearances that the image becomes "edifying." There are mockeries which purify, just as there are apologies which betray. Like the magistrate, literature punishes also by means of the sword of denunciation and scandal.

But scandal is in itself only the reverse of the utopian function of culture. The imagination, insofar as it is prospecting for the most impossible potentials of man, is the advanced eye of

a mankind on the march toward a greater lucidity, a greater maturity, in brief, toward the stature of an adult. The artist, then, is in the cultural sphere what the man of non-violence is in the political sphere. He is the "intemperate" man. He is taking the greatest risks for he never knows if he is creating or destroying, perhaps destroying while thinking that he is actually constructing, or constructing while thinking that he is destroying. He does not know if he is planting when it is the time to uproot, or uprooting when it is time to plant.

Should we therefore be afraid of the enormous risk that it is to be a man? Perhaps we must refer this perilous schooling of man through good and evil to the generosity of God and confide ourselves to his generosity.

We conclude where we began, since the validity of this essay depends on the interpretation which the Fathers used to give to the image of God. You may recall that when the Gnostics wanted to embarrass the early Fathers with the problem of evil, the latter did not hesitate to include in the grandeur of creation the creations of a free man capable of disobeying. The risk of evil

was thus included in their eyes in the coming of maturity of all creation; as Irenaeus declares:

God manifests his generosity and thereby man has known both the good of obedience and the evil of disobedience, in order that the eye of his intelligence, through the experience of both one and the other, might make a choice of better things with sound judgment, and never be negligent or lazy in what concerns the commandment of God.

For Tertullian, too, man is constituted image of God in terms of his free commitment:

It was necessary that the image and likeness of God be established free and autonomous, in its will, since this freedom is what is defined as the image and likeness of God. . . .

Through freedom man ceases to be a slave of nature; He takes possession of his rightful good as a man, and guarantees his excellence, not as a child who receives but as a man who consents.

Perhaps it is necessary for us to believe that God, wishing to be known and loved freely, Himself ran this risk which is named Man.

*Translated by* GEORGE GINGRAS



# THE BELIEVER'S UNBELIEF

IDA FRIEDERIKA GÖRRES

adapted by A. Z. SERRAND

The present article is translated from *SIGNES DE TEMPS*, the Dominican-edited monthly which continues the great tradition of *LA VIE INTELLECTUELLE* (29 Blvd. Latour-Mabourg, Paris 7, \$6.50 a year). Fr. Serrand's "Azimuths," a discussion of current themes under discussion in Catholic periodicals, is one of the most valued regular features of this journal.

Frau Ida Görres is already known in the U.S. for her study of ST. THÉRESE OF LISIEUX (Pantheon) and the out-of-print *IDEA OF SANCTITY* (Sheed and Ward); worth recalling, too, was her outspoken "Letter to the Church" (DUBLIN REVIEW, 1949).

The article will be more meaningful if the reader knows more of Reinhold Schneider, whose posthumously published (1958) *WINTER IN WIEN* is under discussion in it. The best up-to-date treatment of Schneider and his views appears in the last chapter of Karl Pflieger's *KUNDSCHAETER DER EXISTENZLEFE*, Frankfurt/Main, Carlos-druckerei, 1959, pp 235-284.

Schneider was known especially as an historian, with works on Philip II, the Jesuit colony in Paraguay, and the Hohenzollern. The latter, delineating the tragic dimensions of the Prussian spirit, was forbidden by the Nazis. His studies of Greek tragedy, Camões, and Corneille were also widely admired, and Pflieger emphasizes the influence of Miguel de Unamuno.

The experience of World War II seemed to strengthen his religious faith, and some of his poems were secretly distributed, even at the front lines, as a testimony of spiritual resistance. Some of his admirers were discon-

certed by his returning pessimism in the post-war years, as well as his total pacifism. The confinement of his last years is made understandable in the article we are reprinting.

The expression of his ultimate understanding of our times is communicated in *DER CHRISTLICHE PROTEST* and *VERHÜLLTER TAG* (both in 1954), as well as the more autobiographical *WINTER IN WIEN* and *PFEILER IM STROM* (1958), in which he returns, with deepened awareness, to the problem of history. For example, after a lecture in Vienna by Otto Hahn on the atom, the question was raised during the discussion: can the message of Jesus guarantee world peace? Schneider answered: "Christ is not the keeper of this world. He is our deadly liberty."

Even as he fought his way back to Christianity, Schneider complained that it no longer accepted tragedy. By wanting to give personal testimony to the tragedy of Christian existence, his refuge became the Cross. Pflieger's essay shows very well the prophetic dimension of this psychological attitude.

## The Difficulty of Faith . . .

HOW I WOULD rather keep silent about this change, which has been wrought in me for some years by the discovery of dark perspectives. Kind people keep on seeing in me the one I used to be, in the time when my name was well known in certain areas, in the time when I was a busy spokesman in the defense of religion . . . , but effortlessly, and without any resistance, I escape the fisherman through the net. . . . If I wanted to present what is happening to me this winter in pathetic terms, I would speak of an in-

terior cataclysm, of the irruption, in a now-vacant space, of murky waters sprung from the deep. What surprises me is that I feel no anguish, but a kind of calm at finding myself back where I was in my youth (before my conversion to Catholicism) . . . while the pontiff raises the host, the chalice, I sense myself gliding outside this reality, outside this realm of truth; without a murmur, keeping a constant veneration, a constant gratitude, without any rebellion, but carried away by all my existential weight, with closed eyes and a silent mouth. . . . A mortal must feed only on mortal thoughts; a mortal should forbid himself immortal thoughts.

These sentences, taken from a personal journal, express a state of mind which at first glance is hardly compatible with Catholic faith. As the legacy of a famous convert, to whom many of his brothers owe the keeping or the re-discovery of their faith, do not such confidences risk provoking a scandal in the community which saw in him one of its guides?

Along with many others of similar tenor, these words come from *Winter in Vienna*, a book published shortly after the death, on Easter Sunday 1958, of its author, Reinhold Schneider. Voices as representative of German Catholicism as those of Friedrich Heer and Hans Urs von Balthasar\* have hailed him as a poet, an historian, and a theologian of value, one of the deepest analysts of spiritual and political power, one of the most perspicacious interpreters of our time.

We can understand, therefore, why the distinguished weekly *DER CHRISTLICHE SONNTAG* asked Frau Ida Friederike Görres, whose penetration and courage are known—and sometimes even feared—in Germany and elsewhere, to devote an important study (January 10, 1959) to this book and its problems: the unbelief of believers. Schneider's reputation and

personality would alone have merited such consideration. But Ida Görres is above all convinced that this problem interests more Christians than one might think. She believes it because this malaise appears to her as a normal consequence of the spiritual movements which have jolted her generation in Germany, England, the United States, and France. Her belief is strengthened, too, by Schneider's decision to publish *Winter in Vienna*: a writer who is so little given to personal confidence would not have offered the public the spectacle of such a crisis had he judged it to be purely subjective.

### And Not Only for the Intellectual

**F**RAU GÖRRES is convinced, finally, that many Christians of a non-intellectual culture know this suffering, which is often made worse because of an inability to give expression to it as they would want.

No, it isn't reason which causes faith to crack. People should take more seriously the action of suffering upon that rock, an erosion which destroys it. We are at a point where history, and the believing existence within history, is brought to the very limit of the absurd . . . and where the sick man must finally confess his own sickness . . . To my way of thinking, faith is more difficult today than it used to be. For all those things which men used to seek by getting down on their knees, nowadays nature provides some kind of resource. Either that, or there isn't any. For us, it is faith itself which is at stake. It is hard to speak alone in the darkness, to pray in a purely formal manner, to send prayers into an empty space. Do you know that? . . . Unceasingly, I take up the constant supplication of the Church: 'Show me Thy face.' What a strange thing to pray in this way, when we know that this face will not be visible any more. . . . For me, there is no longer a convincing answer to the problem of the suffering of the innocents. Nor can I find any-

\* HOCHLAND, Aug. 1958, pp. 522-535.

thing to be said when a woman who has been grievously tried says to me, 'Don't talk to me about the freedom of the children of God: it doesn't exist. . . . The knowledge of man cannot remain unpunished, and in any case we know far too much. . . . Far more men suffer from the absence of God than we have thought.

In the light of these confidences, as well as others, the case of Reinhold Schneider seems, therefore, exemplary; what he was calling for, he himself was:

A single man who would intensify authenticity in himself to the highest tension, authenticity, or the tragic, or art, or faith, or love—that is, extreme existence; this is what we lack. Our essential poverty is this absence of the radical aspect, the lack of men who would be pure chemical elements.

The book of Reinhold Schneider presents us with an extreme existence, that of a man attacked in his faith, and fallen in full struggle.

Since we agree with Ida Görres as to the 'radical' nature of Schneider's fate, its exemplary character, we will try to present, in a somewhat different order and sometimes in summary, the essential traits of the diagnosis, and the spiritual interpretation which it gives of a malaise which is not as exceptional as is thought.

### The Causes of the Malaise

ACCORDING to Frau Görres, this crisis was provoked in her generation by the shock of reality which destroyed an overly-optimistic vision of the world. She sketches its advent and components. Of course, Reinhold Schneider was not a participant in the decisive events, but he felt their consequences and knew the climate of those Catholic circles which he frequented after his conversion. The analysis may be reduced to the following outline:

*From the sociological "Faith of a Child" to the "Faith of Youth."* Before the first World War there seems to have reigned in German Catholicism, as a result of a ghetto-like atmosphere, a mentality akin to that of those besieged, which might be called, from a sociological point of view, the "faith of a child." Among the laity this often amounted to a kind of devout obscurantism. Quite abruptly, after the war, this "faith of a child" gave way, on a sociological level, to the "faith of youth" in intellectual circles. This was accompanied by appropriate traits of adolescence, manifesting itself as aggressive, triumphant, enthusiastic about theology to the point of intoxication, seeing the real world only through its desires, mistaking the optative mood for the indicative, and believing that the Church, and the Church alone, should have (and had) an answer to everything. All of this involved a kind of alienation from reality in the direction of optimism.

The laity's theology and religious thought in those days had thus built up a "magnificent world theater, of impressive dimensions, and with captivating decorations. With pride we invited the whole world to enter it, to enjoy its splendor. It is easy to imagine how much ideology went into all this. . . . In fact, what we were building up as the Christian faith and the Christian image of the world was only, so to speak, a luxury model."

Frau Görres is very careful at this point to justify the legitimate dialogue between faith and the human mind, by which the latter knows his redemption—just as does human love, through its dialogue with charity. But like any other, Christian thought can at times succumb to a dangerous rationalism, the disturbance of which can shake the very foundations of faith.

*The Shock of Reality.* Sooner or later, however, there comes a time of testing.

For some, it is a normal consequence of maturity and old age—what Werner Bergengruen, a famous author and friend of Reinhold Schneider, calls “the gnawing darkness.”

The progressive annihilation of all things: security, habits, ways of life, human relations, objects one thought indispensable, principles, all these things not only appear subject to outside risks which make them unavailable—as we are taught each hour of the years we live—but they begin to lose their importance, their necessity, even their meaning. What was important becomes indifferent; things which appeared necessary for life disappear without leaving a void. The circle of the absolute becomes smaller: the pressures of conditioned things circumscribing it are daily growing, and catching up with it.

*The Spectacle of the World.* Many saw the magnificent decor of their imaginary worlds blown apart by the tornadoes of Nazism and the last war. For others optimism collapses before the spectacle of our time. A single issue of a weekly picture magazine—the only reading of millions of men—is enough to convince them. When they look at their newspapers and see large photographs in which one can see faces in a crowd—especially woman's faces, as perhaps at a boxing match—it is enough to teach them the horror of our existence. This would be true even without mentioning the last quarter-century of the world's history, or the statistics which tell us how many die of starvation every hour during peacetime. And certainly there is no lack of occasion for us to despair of the current representations of our faith.

### **The Triple Scandal of Reinhold Schneider**

THE ANCIENT theologians spoke with great assurance about the “two books” of God: Scripture and Creation. But it can happen that the voice of the

second will appear to replace that of the first. This seems to have happened to Reinhold Schneider. Over and over in *Winter in Vienna* he points up the three sources of the attacks on his faith, and the thought that was nourished by that faith: (1) terror before the cosmos, as we see it anew in terms of recent discoveries: the empty spaces of astronomy; swarming life and death, from which grace is absent, in the worlds of biology and zoology; the life of primitives, as ethnology shows it to us; (2) terror before history, which constantly demands the impossible, and must fail in terms of that need, which transforms its successes into defeats; (3) terror before the inconceivable future which is approaching, hour by hour, fear of that technical civilization which is already present.

Schneider's hypersensitive soul groaned before these three spectacles. It hung on to them like a leech; insatiable, shivering but magnetized, he kept seeking, in newspapers and scientific journals, for fresh details of the horrible.

The world becomes constantly more incomprehensible to me, a fate without hope of life, the sentence of existence, a hell wherein one turns and turns, nothingness masked as torture. . . . In the Ethnographical Museum each room is the torture-chamber of a people, of a tribe. . . . What a hell was their existence, almost all of them! At the bottom of this round, turning hell, one ought to raise one's eyes to the Father of Love; who would not put his hand before his eyes?

Among the burdens which unbalance a poet, one of the heaviest is the suffering of creatures. There is no need to go very far, or even to get a microscope or a telescope. Just read a chapter on parasites, just let us remember the disappearance, which was mysterious but surely painful, of the great saurians and the great mammoths. And the face of the Father? One cannot imagine it! . . .

The cruel, or rather the perfidious and inexhaustible possibilities of tor-

ture which are in our nature finally prevail over my poor faith. My astonishment at the finality which organizes one animal for the destruction of another borders on despair. Our time is best expressed by its absurdities; I cannot stop gathering them. Man cannot with impunity contemplate the cosmos, the depths of the sea, human history, nor even perhaps himself. . . . Even after Original Sin nature should mirror the image of God. But revelation and theology always remain for us the debtors of this image.

Oh, certainly, theologians can give an answer to all this which makes the problem disappear. In fact Reinhold Schneider constantly alludes to this, with a light but corrosive bitterness:

Naturally, every seminary student can contradict me after having devoutly offered me his compliments. I can only register amazement at this art of passing beyond difficulties, without denying them, in order to demonstrate the God of love. . . . Naturally, my interlocutor is more equipped than I am in learning, quotations, proofs, tactics. I have been surprised by the boldness of certain definitions. But it's just like a little frog: it slips between your fingers; and when all has been said, nothing has been said. . . . Theology can resolve such problems, even reduce them to nothing, but without reaching the vital contents of the existential experience in which they are rooted. We can cut the mushrooms which are only protrusions, or wait for age to decompose them, but their original filament does not die. It has curled around my own roots.

*The End of a Certain Theodicy.\** We see here, perhaps, the end of theodicy in the conscience of a believer. It has burnt itself up in its optimistic exaggerations. The ideal image of God, in perfect harmony, with neither crack nor shadow, which we owe to our religious formation,

\* First used in a more restricted sense, this word ended by being used as a description of the rational approach to the problem of God, his existence and attributes.

this language of worried pedagogues has not survived when confronted with the language of God himself in his creation. Study this creation in its reality, not in the model of it presented by Catholic schools, and you will fall upon the old gods who, because they have not been integrated in the image of The Unique One, but have only been pushed aside by it, reveal themselves in fearful solitude, breathing nothing but vengeance: the Kali, the Ciwa, the Fatum of the ancient pagans: "The Father's face has darkened; I see in it the terrible mask of the Crusher, the Oppressor: I can no longer really say, 'Father.'"

If we consider this simply the exaggeration of a poet, let us recall the long hold that Manicheism had on St. Augustine, and the way in which mosquitoes were skillfully evoked by that heresy, or the Lisbon earthquake to which we owe Voltaire's *Candide*. I would like to have quoted at this point the pages\*\* of Friedrich Heer in which he criticizes the altogether too permeable attitude towards death and earthly suffering which he found typical of Catholic youth movements.

#### Diagnosis of Evil: Crisis or Loss of Faith?

**N**CESSARY CRISES. When one undergoes such a collapse within one self, one has the tendency to experience it as the progress of unbelief. Unfortunately, we have all grown up with what we could almost call the fixed idea that when the familiar colors with which the faith was portrayed begin to fade, or give way to others, we have "lost the faith." This fear was the scarecrow of all devout pedagogues, the great threat for their fledglings, from which they had to be protected at all costs. I am sure that on account of this behavior men

\*\* HOCHLAND, August 1958, pp. 531 ff.



have had to transform into fact the catastrophe depicted on the wall.

The crisis of faith which makes one emerge from "the Faith of Childhood" is as natural as puberty: it is only a spiritual variation of it. But we are apt to find it harder to admit that "the Faith of Youth" must also die in order to ripen. Since it is often tough and tenacious, and the man who is undergoing the experience is an adult in terms of age, he frequently lives in the illusion that this form of faith is definitive and ultimate, and any change is accompanied by a feeling of guilt, terror, or sadness, as if it were a precipice or a slope in front of a precipice. Often a mature man who discovers this evolution in himself hides it, as if fearful of making it contagious by uncovering it.

*Difficult and Painful.* The process has serious consequences. We too little realize that, at whatever time it may come, making the distinction between the substance of faith and the expression of faith is very difficult. Their mutual rapport is not that of the painting and the frame, or of the oyster and the pearl, but of the body and the soul. The inherited "image of the world" is the soul in which faith ripens and bears fruit, the flesh wherein the message of faith is incarnated. And when a separation is imposed, which is in a way to be expected, since the images of the world are temporary, while the message is everlasting, it is a real agony for the man who is subject to it. It is obvious that all do not have the necessary resources to give their faith more than a single incarnation. A particular individual may have invested in this unique form all his being, all his spiritual possessions. What is to be melted down, and what is to remain so that this process can take place? Is it necessary to consider the possibility that within the Church this remelting be done by a division of labor? Are some to incarnate duration, and

others dissolution (what the ancient alchemists called putrefaction), with others entrusted with the achievement of a new crystallization, while for a very small number the entire process would take place in microcosm? However, for many of those who do not successfully achieve this transformation, or for whom it seems impossible, once this painful separation of "the soul and the body" has taken place, do they not feel themselves in the state of a true "separated soul," painful in its baring, its nudity, in the deep isolation which theology ascribes to the soul deprived of its body? But isn't purgatory a state oriented in hope, looking towards the resurrection? (Does the soul have consciousness of this? Does every soul?)

*True and False Unbelief.* As a result of this experience, some will reach what Bergengruen describes in the following terms: "The inscribed circle of the absolute, even if it is resolved in a single point, gains a luminosity, an irrepressible sparkle which goes beyond all the concentric thicknesses of ashes."

But what happens when this very nucleus loses its light for the understanding? This is a frequent occurrence nowadays, when we make almost automatically an equation between faith on one hand, and the understanding of faith on the other. As if our own theories on the what and how of our belief and non-belief had more importance than this other question: whether and how an apparently dying or extinguished faith can go on living in us, penetrating life despite everything. Can what is dead still act? Does not a dead faith betray itself by the drying up of its vital expressions: obedience to God's precepts, love of neighbor, prayer or at least an effort at prayer, suffering from God's distance? (We are surely aware that all these realities can weaken in people who keep intact the "notion" of faith.)

No one will deny that there is an au-

thentic unbelief and an authentic passage to unbelief. But just as there is, alongside a genuine faith, its double which has only the appearances of true faith, and just as they are often difficult to tell apart, there is also a false unbelief which bears a striking resemblance to the authentic one. In the authentic loss of faith, the exterior forms become empty because the contents crumble, melt, retreat, and are replaced by others. In the false unbelief, the external structures burst because the contents grow, massive with life.

Authentic unbelief is proud of itself, and is irritated by or laughs at the spectacle of the simple believer; it confirms in their doubts those who weaken; it ridicules those who bear or represent the Church, and rejoices in their imperfections and mistakes.

That manner of unbelief which I would prefer to call blinded faith, or blindfolded faith, behaves quite differently. It continues walking at the modest pace of the ordinary Christian. It does not show its distress. How many among us lead this life? There are priests grappling with the intimate obscurities which devour them; nuns for whom, in the secret of their souls, everything seems to have lost all meaning; the parish assistant who with fearless courage maintains and fortifies in the faith those who are entrusted to his care. There are lay people who get accustomed to the idea of being in a rabbit-hutch, for whom the liturgy has become a scandal, who at Mass only notice the priest's routine, his mediocre sermon, and the pretensions of the choir, but who nevertheless not only never miss Mass, but what is more, as often as they can, give it their time, their sleep, and their strength. In this way they unfailingly bring others to the faith, strengthening them in it, teaching them to pray, to be steadfast for the good; forgiving injuries, combating their own faults with all their strength, they act as

models of goodness, patience, self-control and generosity to others. God shines through them. But they themselves do not see this. God strengthens them without comforting them. Those around see them more clearly than they do. "When she has left, there still remains a bright spot where she was sitting," writes the friend of a woman who thought herself to be an abyss of darkness.

### Spiritual Interpretation

*. . . and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was (Ex. XX, 21).*

This is a strange thing: there is an unbelievably wide and deep Catholic tradition of the dark night of the soul and of the mind. From Denys the Areopagite, through the imageless and non-conceptual mysticism of the German masters, past Catherine of Genoa, and on to the classical structure of this theme as used by the Spaniards—so loved by Schneider—especially John of the Cross, up to the letters of Francis de Sales, Caussade, and Alphonsus Liguori, who have devoted to this theme alone many volumes, and now in the distress of the little Therese of Lisieux in her last illness, and in the depths of our own time, this current remains constant and strong. This whole choir is powerful in its agreement that such an experience is a grace, a superior stage of the spiritual life, an entrance into a deeper closeness with the inexpressible, with the inaccessible Light which necessarily blinds our eyes. They agree that such an experience purifies our limited understanding of verbal and mental images which are always insufficient and divisive. As is written on Newman's tomb, this insufficiency of ours only gropes its way towards the truth through shadows and images. Even the great pagan sages knew and know that the "Name which is unutterable is not the Name."

Nevertheless, on account of an almost obstinate humility, none of those who feel themselves subjected to this test dare apply to it this classical, general and orthodox doctrine. The widespread preconception is so deeply ingrained in them that this explanation would only be valid for the religious genius, for the obvious saint. At least a few ecstasies, a few stigmata or visions would appear to be needed before they would allow these data to be used to light their own path. They proceed as if this phenomenon was not encountered on a wide scale.

*An Unbelief which is a Grace.* Reinhold Schneider, who himself wrote admirably about these Spanish mystics, did not make this identification. We shall see this light shining all the brighter between his obscure lines. "To pray beyond faith, despite faith, despite unbelief, despite oneself, every day that a bad conscience towards the Church secretly makes its way,—to pray against oneself, against one's personal conviction—as long as one feels the weight of this obligation, there is grace in it: *there is unbelief which has its place in the realm of Grace.* This experience, beginning with despair before the cosmos and history, this despair before the Cross, is this today's Christianity? This obligation, this obscurity, fearless before death, this "little Passion," could yet be a promise: "*numen adest, divinity is there.*"

"(To the extent that I withdraw, I am dragged back.)" This sentence, which is placed between parentheses, is perhaps the final statement. Here it is that the burning bush is beginning to shine with the presence of divinity—with a light visible to others, even though it does not see itself shining.

But I no longer know what I live and what I am, always happy, always lost, in a blissful accord with my fate. What I mean to say is that I cannot grasp the object of debate, that which hides within me, that which is with-

drawn from me, stealthily, under the mystery of mercy.

This intuition has an application beyond his own personal case:

The Church goes on dying, and goes on living, and finally it is a grace which calls to us day and night. Ah, the great grace that night is. . . There have to be death and doubt within the Church. Outside of her walls, they have little meaning: they are everywhere. But here! What a conception of the Church, which has room for such agonies, such attitudes! O great solitude, great freedom, you who call us back home, be blessed!

"Doubt feeds faith, and faith feeds doubt." There is the destiny and the vocation of a handful of people in the Church.

We are the generation which has no need to be comforted. We offer ourselves to a world without consolation. . . . We are asked, beyond our strength, that we believe, with rock-like firmness, that through these declines passes the road to salvation. For if these walls crumble, it is because their foundations have been shaken by the pressure of the future.

Yes, *numen adest*, divinity is there, Divinity, no, God Himself, is very close to such men who today, after the seven fat years of the capitalism of faith and the saturating wealth of thought, proceed on the path of a truly holy poverty and renunciation. Our religion is renewed in them, witnesses of pure faith, of faith alone. . . .

One other important thing is personified in them: the end of religious individualism. Personal religious experience no longer has any interest, any more than personal intentions. The masters of the spiritual life had always stressed the insignificance of religious emotions: but for us this judgment includes religious thoughts as well, to which we have given too much importance. What matters is not our reaction

to the Annunciation, but the Annunciation itself.

The people look toward the flag. The standard-bearer must keep it upright; what happens within him is without interest. His own faith does not mean much; it is from the flag that strength comes; this is the demand of history. Wouldn't this be more important than the destiny of souls, which is too personal, more important than the mere detail that a soul succumbs under the weight? . . . Who can guess what intimate darknesses were hidden under the crusader's mantle and the religious habit? The sacrifice of the knight could consist in showing the shield bearing the coat of arms, and protecting the secret of his sorrow.

With this quotation, Ida Görres closes her essay. The image is deeply stirring. The phrase that introduces it also

evokes the Church's conviction that God keeps his promise of truth and holiness, whatever the intimate distress of the man who transmits his word. But mindful as they are of the proclamation, neither the Church nor the Gospel (*Luke 10, 20*) would think of considering the personal fate of the herald as simply a secondary detail. Would Pascal, whom Schneider loved, have accepted this desperate comfort? And would Paul, so convinced of his unworthiness and weakness, so ready to sacrifice himself for his mission, even to the point of wishing to be separated from Christ (*Rom. 9, 3*) in exchange for the conversion of his people—would Paul have been reconciled to God's taking him at his word?

Translated by MICHEL ROUSSELIN

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# FROM THE LOGIC OF HISTORY TO AN ETHIC FOR THE HISTORIAN

H. I. MARROU

**I**F WILHELM DILTHEY returned among us, he might well show some satisfaction on learning of the progress achieved in the elaboration of a theory of history. The intellectual undertaking begun by him in the years 1860-1870, and which led in one direction to Max Weber and Raymond Aron, and in another, to Heidegger and Jaspers (Eric Dardel in France), has succeeded, as he wished, in constituting a Critique of Reason in its Historical Usage. It has given historical knowledge a rational foundation which determines the legitimacy of that knowledge—simultaneously justifying and limiting it. The reference to Kant is unavoidable, not only as a homage to the youthful ambitions of Dilthey, but also because this new conception brings about, at the level of historical method, a reversal of perspective analogous to the one that the Kantian

revolution achieved in the theory of knowledge.

As against positivism, whose ideal for history—as for all the sciences of man—was above all to be “objective,” the new historical spirit now opposes a clear realization of the active role which belongs, in this order of knowledge, to the subject—the historian. It is his categories, his curiosity, and his human experience which determine, model, indeed construct the historical work. No one any longer today would dare to reduce the role of the historian to that of a recording apparatus, simply assigned the task of reproducing its object, the past, with mechanical fidelity: to photograph it, as used to be said around 1900. (The image was misleading, for we have learned to make better use of our machine and today know how much construction there is in a photographic image which transcribes reality by selecting and deforming according to vantage point, depth of field, focus, and the unequal sensitivity of the emulsion to different wavelengths of light.

The progress of our critical methodology leads, if not to “the dissolution of the object” (as R. Aron puts it with a slightly polemical emphasis), at least to getting beyond the distinction, once classical in Germany, between *Geschichte* and *Historie*: “historic reality” and “historical knowledge”; the past already actually lived by men of flesh and blood, and the image of that past which the patient labor of the historian reconstructs little by little. For a long time it was customary to apologize for the lack of flexibility of the French language which always refused to express this dis-

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inction. Not enough attention was paid to its artificiality even in German: Hegel wrote, "In our language, the word *Geschichte* reunites the objective as well as the subjective aspects and designates the *historiam rerum gestarum* as well as the *res gestas* themselves" (it was Tönnies who contributed this significant text to the documents for the article "Histoire" in André Lalande's *Vocabulaire Philosophique*). It is always necessary to be very attentive to these meanings of language; the genius of a language often expresses an implicit wisdom.

In fact, this antithesis is like all those of the same sort which the most recent generations of German thought have used and abused (*Kultur-Zivilisation*, *Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaft*, Priesthood and Prophecy, Apollo and Dionysius, Classic and Baroque...). They are rather crude instruments of analysis, critical rather than ontological entities, poles between which reality is re-arranged but also decomposed. The reality here, the only reality that language has ever designated, is the conscious grasp of the human past, realized in the thought and by the effort of the historian. Its reality is located at neither of the two poles, but in the synthesis, the link between the present and the past which the creative act of the historian establishes.

Of course, since history is a science, it supposes an object: history claims to reach the actually lived past of humanity. But it is only by an abuse of language that one can designate that past, antecedent to the elaboration of a knowledge of it, by words like *Geschichte* or History. Its mode of being is of an entirely different order. Since it is necessary to designate it by a name, I propose to adopt the name "Evolution," though this is itself quite ambiguous. Given precision by biology, this concept designates very clearly the tangled skein of causal relationships spread out in time, which tie the living being to its direct antecede-

dents. It does not seem to me that there is any inconvenience in extending its usage from the time required for the genesis of species to that, incomparably shorter and nearer, lived by *homo sapiens* since the emergence of his type.

The difference of scale between the two durations, the essential difference of the observed results, are not opposed to such a semantic extension; more important than the difference is the analogy. In both cases the present state of the being is explained by the heritage of its past: just as the stylets of the cannon bone of the horse are the result of the progressive reduction of the metatarsus of his Tertiary ancestor, just so the French of today are what they have been made by the years 1940-45, by the period between the wars, by the years 1914-18, and so on back to Caesar, Vercingetorix, our ancestors the Gauls, the neolithic settlers, and still further back to all that which we cannot even conjecture. As the representative of a particular biological species, the man of such and such a cultural milieu is the son of his past, of all his past. The revolutions that break most radically with the past are unable to do away with this legacy. Thus for one who knows something of the history of Russia, the same U.S.S.R. which purports to be totally Marxist owes many of the characteristics of its civilization (for example, the conscience untroubled by resort to police terrorism) to its Mother, the Russia of the Czars, and beyond to Byzantine Constantinople, whose example so profoundly influenced the Third Rome.

But this actually lived past, this Evolution of humanity, is not History; the latter is not a simple transcription of the former, as one could have imagined it in a pre-Kantian theory of knowledge. In coming to life again in the consciousness of the historian, the human past takes on a completely different character; it changes ontologically. First, that which

makes the evolution of humanity, that which "has been effective" in its past, is the *totality* of the fabric of causal relationships; this ensemble is never recovered entirely in knowledge, and that for two reasons: technical limitations (how many "effective" factors have disappeared forever, without leaving a trace in our documents?) and particularly, logical limitations (history receives from the past only the aspects, the elements that the "theory" of the historian retains in its net). It is necessary to insist on this: only the divine thought, because it is omniscient and omniscapable, can possess the totality of the past. History, thought by men, will never represent more than a selection from it. Doubtlessly the historian can intend to compose a summary but exact picture of this inexhaustible past by selecting the "important" facts and the "profound" causes; but this choice will always be relative to the doctrine which has led him to consider one thing as accidental and another as essential, thus belonging to human thought and not to the "object."

The more comprehensive our ideal of history (to discover the greatest number of different aspects of the human past), the more the dream of a universal total history shows itself to be unrealizable. Undoubtedly, one will seek to approximate it by means of a collective synthesis, in which will be associated the savants of a generation, of an epoch, but to the extent that such a collaboration is possible (and to that extent has its limits), the history thus elaborated will be found to reflect the collective mentality of the generation or the epoch, and itself will have brought about an arbitrary and limited choice. All history is dated by its authors: when we read again the history of Rome in Mommsen or Gaston Boissier, what renders it "outmoded" or "old" is not essentially the subsequent progress in our documentation (let us say rather the changes, for all is not

progress in the evolution of historical science; if there are areas in which we know more things or know them better than in the 19th century, in other fields there is regression; thus since rhetoric is no longer part of the secondary school curriculum, our communion with the Greek and Latin classics, the "comprehension" that we have of them, has diminished markedly); it is above all the fact that we have changed and that we no longer see ancient Rome with the eyes of a German or of the generation of 1848 or those of the liberal of the Second Empire. We no longer pose the same problems; no longer judge by the same values.

Furthermore, in history, the past does not appear simply transcribed or reproduced: it is affected by a specific qualification; it is known *as* past. I do not mean by that simply that it is presented henceforth as accomplished, completed, perfect (in the grammatical sense of the word), whereas while it was real, lived, it was the present for its contemporaries (this point has already been clearly brought to light, especially by R. Aron). It is necessary to recognize that historic knowledge establishes a relationship between the events of another time and the thought of the historian in which they are actualized again; it establishes both the past event and the distance, the perspective, which separates us from it. It is only by metaphor that it is said of the historian that he "reanimates, makes live again, resurrects" the past.

If I study the life of St. Paul, my awareness represents to me simultaneously the events taking place in the first century of our era and the distance of nineteen centuries that separates me from them. I do not know St. Paul as if he lived in our time; it is actually in this synthesis between living reality and penetration into the heart of the past that the essence of the historical spirit is found (do we not say of the Italian

painters of the Renaissance who represent the scenes of the Gospel with characters in the costume of their time, "that they do not have the historical sense"?). On this subject, I remember a polemic I had with the American exegete, Edgar J. Goodspeed, who, in his translation of the New Testament, translated the salutation *Kairé* of the Pauline epistles with a simple "Good bye!". This is not translating. It is deceiving to make the reader think that the *Epistles* had been thought by a man of the twentieth century when they were dictated by a Greek of the first, that is to say, by one of those men who greeted one another by saying "Re-joice" (they were perfectly aware of the meaning of *Kairé* as one can see in St. Paul himself), instead of mumbling an unintelligible formula that no one understands or hears, "How d' y' do" or "Good bye," as the Anglo-Saxons do today.

On the other hand, this knowledge of the past as such is itself in the present; it lives in the consciousness of the historian or of his reader. As knowledge of the human past, it introduces values and spiritual realities of a specifically human order into this consciousness, to which it reacts in characteristic fashion, that is, freely. (The philosophical reader will readily understand that I do not intend by this word to ignore or to solve the problem of liberty itself; I am using the word in the pragmatic sense of everyday speech.) It is here that a difference appears, crucial from the point of view of "historiody" (the justification of history as a part of culture), between history and the biological evolution with which we have thus far only been able to compare the evolution of humanity.

If a horse could become conscious of the transformations undergone by his ancestors or uncles, the architherium or the hipparion, that would change nothing of his bone structure or of his way of running. The evolution of humanity

also weighs upon us in tyrannical fashion, but from the moment when it transforms itself into clear consciousness on the level of history, we become free in regard to it. Dilthey often emphasized the fact that history frees us (in a certain measure which it would be interesting and useful to specify) from historical determinism. Stalin could have been led by a historical study of the notion of personal liberty (such as Lord Acton undertook) to recoil in horror at what survived in him of Ivan the Terrible, and consequently to modify the workings of the M.V.D., the heir of the N.K.V.D., of the G.P.U., the Cheka, and so on, back to the *agentes in rebus* of the Late Empire and the *frumentarii* of Hadrian.

This liberty is coextensive with the whole of history, with human knowledge of the human past. Nothing that is man can remain foreign to me; it is not necessary that it be the past of my biological line in order for me to be interested in it. From the moment that I take it up into the history that I rethink, it becomes mine; I can, as I please, assume its values or refuse them and set my culture in opposition to that earlier form of spirit. As one example, we may consider the remarkable fecundity of the history of art which, if it is not pure erudition (dating, comparing, cataloguing works), if it is truly history—that is, an authentic repossession of values—brings about an extraordinary enlargement of our repertoire and of our esthetic experience.

Such analyses could be multiplied indefinitely. No matter how it is approached, history will reveal the same synthetic structure: the object (past, evolution of humanity) is not apprehended except as refracted through the subject, whose role constantly appears important to us. What a reversal in comparison with the positivist conception, obsessed with objectivity! Renan said that one

should elaborate an "exact science of the things of the spirit"; "consider human events from the outside, like a thing," Durkheim recommended. We can understand how the late R. G. Collingwood, archeologist and historian of Roman Britain, in his posthumous book, *The Idea of History*, could speak of a "Copernican revolution" in our conception of history.

Since I am writing here for philosophers, I think it of interest to note that our daily experience as working historians corresponds, without our intending it, to the conclusions of the logicians. Historians of antiquity, who for lack of materials are often forced to work on secondary sources—Herodotus, Thucydides, Tacitus, etc.—are well aware that earlier historians teach them as much about the men that they are as about the events which they relate. I have just reread Ammianus Marcellinus. He is an incomparable source for the Late Empire, but more because of what his book teaches us about the man of the 4th century that Ammianus himself was than because of what he tells us about the reign of Constantius II or of Julian the Apostate. Specialists in modern history, confronted in their turn with an inexhaustible mass of documents, experience each day the selective character of knowledge. "Historical facts are, in large measure, constructions of History," writes Lucien Febvre, for example (in the introduction which he wrote to the *Trois Essais sur Histoire et Culture* of Charles Morazé).

This transcending of positivism appears to be connected, among the historians of our time, with a renewal or expansion of the meaning of the word "history": "this history, simultaneously enlarged and deepened" of which Marc Bloch speaks (Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch have been the most effective agents in this renewal, but the new historical spirit extends well beyond their direct

influence; it is the common property of a generation and not merely of a school). What one used to call history was above all a narrative, a chain of events, especially political and military, presented in chronological and topological order. I still remember hearing the aged Charles Seignobos tell us that history consists in establishing a series of "events," each one on its index card. To establish these "event-facts," one made special use of narrative sources (chronicles, memoirs, court proceedings). It can be seen that a superficial logic would consider that the "events" existed prefabricated somehow in the document, the role of the critic being limited to cleaning or separating the good grain of the authentic witness from the cockles that the incompetence or bad faith of the narrator had added to it. And, if one makes material facts the essence of history, it is understandable that one can speak of objectivity (that Caesar was stabbed—let us not say assassinated or executed, for that is to introduce a "value," an element that is necessarily subjective—in the curia on the Ides of March, 44, is a "fact" that can be considered "objectively" established).

But the material facts no longer appear to us as the essence of history. They are only its skeleton—a necessary but not a sufficient condition. Historical knowledge consists in *understanding* these facts, and a profound comprehension of human events requires that one reclothe this material skeleton with the tissue of values which give them a meaning and significance. They must be rethought, and with thought, all the subjectivity of the historian comes into play. Far more than a critical chronology, history is this *repossession of values*, and this to the extent that the program of study is extended beyond the political annal-writing to which it was previously reduced. For us, this is no longer anything but the most elementary zone of history,



which we wish to extend to an understanding in depth of all the manifestations of social, economic, religious and artistic life. I am studying, for example, the Romanesque church of St. Victor of Marseille. When I have established that it was built by H. de Glazinis in about 1250 (there is the "fact" that can be made objective), I will still have accomplished nothing. Everything essential remains: the situation of this church in the development of Provençal Romanesque, the understanding of its structure, the realization of its properly architectural values, its beauty.

To the extent that one penetrates into this properly historical reality, the categories of the logic of positivism appear to be left further and further behind. It is not that they are false or useless; they are simply exoteric, elementary, relevant only to the lowest level of research. Internal criticism, external criticism, documentary procedures—all that is only erudition and not yet truly history. For example, I remember that, while I was in monastic Egypt doing research on the remote origins of the Roman institution of cardinal-deacons, I profited from the study of the account book (in the papyri of the Museum at Cairo) of Ammonios, a Byzantine gentleman of the Thebaïd. A glance sufficed to resolve the problem of authenticity; besides, what forger would have put himself to the trouble of fabricating these bundles of business documents so wanting in apparent intrinsic interest? The date (day, month, year) could be read in every letter; further, for the study of the institutions that I was pursuing, it sufficed to know it within a century. As for a critique of sincerity and exactitude (did the witness wish to deceive us?—could he have deceived himself?), what had that to do with the references which interested me: such-and-such a day, sent to the deacons of the Monastery of Penitence such-and-such a quantity of wheat. . . . Even if

erroneous, even (to push matters to the extreme) if imaginary, these "entries" attest to the existence, at least in the consciousness of my Ammonios, of the charitable institution of the "diaconate" whose trail I was following.

In fact the entire logical problem lay beyond. These papyri constituted an historical document because I was capable of understanding them, because I approached them with a spirit endowed with a certain culture, animated by a curiosity directed in a certain direction. Their fecundity was a direct function of the questions which their reader was capable of putting to them. These same papyri had been studied previously, but without great success, by their first editor, an eminent papyrologist. Why? Because I had the advantage (momentary) over Jean Maspéro of having passed by Rome before going to Egypt, of knowing of the existence and nature of the Roman "diaconates." More important still, I had the advantage of being absorbed by the minor enigma posed by the mystery of their origin and of being thus sensitized in advance to all that, immediately or remotely, in any documents whatever, could furnish me with something relevant.

I have here used an example that is still somewhat crude (it was a matter of locating a well-defined institution, having a characteristic name: its existence is still of the order of objective "fact"). But from the moment that one penetrates a little further in comprehending values, there are no longer any limits to the comparisons one might make. In the first of his *Trois Essais*, Charles Morazé shows with great finesse that the witness of Van Gogh and painters contemporary with him can provide useful clarification of the economic situation, which in its turn enables us to "understand" the accession to power of Jules Ferry. Yes, as R. G. Collingwood says, "Everything is potential evidence."

The informed historian can extract documentary substantiation everywhere. It is in history as it is, according to Pascal, in love: "to the degree that one has more spirit. . ."

Thus there is a remarkable convergence between the practice of historians today and the theory that contemporary philosophy has elaborated about their knowledge. I owe it to the truth to state that so far, in France especially, most historians have not taken cognizance of this convergence. They are raising themselves but slowly from the sluggishness into which positivism has plunged them. The ideal of positivism was to reduce the scholar to the level of the artisan bent over his work, using tools he had not made, applying rules which he did not bother to verify: a lazy and impious doctrine—no one has the right not to be a philosopher—but so consoling. This is cause for regret, for a closer collaboration between practitioners and philosophers would certainly be profitable to both groups.

Many historians experience extreme repugnance in hearing talk of a "Copernican revolution" or of the "limits of historical objectivity." This, it seems to them, is to call into question all that has been acquired by the efforts of preceding generations, to menace even the scientific status of history. How many of my elders have I heard say: "With all your subjectivity you are going to lead us backwards to Michelet if not to Bosuet!" One should be able to pacify them by pointing out that the scientific method does not advance by a linear movement (which would be naive optimism), nor does it move like a pendulum (unjustified pessimism), but rather its advance describes a helix. Progress is effected by transcending, not by reaction. It is only in appearance that we challenge the validity of the axioms of the positivist method. They remain valuable at their level, but the discussion takes

place a little further on; we are on a different coil of the spiral.

Thus, it is classical to say that, in order to be a science, history should be a disinterested activity. And, it is quite evident that this is true in an elementary way. The true historian will never consent to seeing himself reduced to the role of publicist in the service of a ministry of propaganda. But this obvious and well-established fact (which it is necessary to recall and defend, perhaps, in view of the menace which threatens culture with the development of the totalitarian spirit) leaves intact the properly philosophical problem of the existential value of historical research. A brief consideration will suffice to make this clear. If you query an historian about his work in progress, he will often answer you first: "The goat grazes where it is tied." And, he will often give quite extraneous reasons in order to justify his choice of project: the proximity of some collection of documents or some field of excavations, the contingency of a recent discovery which attracted his attention to some document, the exigencies of his career, the urging of an editor. But press him further and the personal, profoundly motivated character of his choice will soon appear. Thus, I published last year *Histoire de l'Education dans l'Antiquité* because it had been commissioned in 1943 by the *Editions du Seuil*. Yes, but the editor is a friend, and if he pressed me to carry out this project it was because he was well aware that it was dear to me, and if he spoke to me of it at the beginning, it is because he had seen that I carried it within me. Furthermore, if I acceded to his requests when I had rejected those of so many others without examination, is this not because I already recognized his project as my own? The choice of subject, in itself, is still nothing; what counts is the manner in which one limits, orients, "understands" it—and the manner in which

one sees it through. However contingent and gratuitous the initial choice is, as soon as historical research goes deeper, as soon as it leaves the exoteric domain of erudition to become truly history, it forces the historian more and more to put himself entirely to the task, to set his whole soul to work, to *interest* himself in his subject.

In principle, as A. Morazé has nicely shown in the *Essai* cited above, every historical problem, however limited it may be, eventually involves universal history; it is a chain reaction: Jules Ferry, Saint-Dié, Alsace, Protestantism . . . , the industrial bourgeoisie, the collapse of agricultural prices, the agrarian structures of the French countryside, the roots of which lead us to prehistory, etc. . . . In principle, it is all of human history that must be taken into account. In fact, the historian will only retain what interests him, what he knows how to perceive. In his treatment of the question proposed, his whole form of spirit will incarnate itself, with its limits, but also with its fundamental orientation, its instinctive affinities, its needs.

We must not describe the radically subjective aspect of historical knowledge by retaining only its negative traits (history gives only a partial and deformed transcription of evolution). It is necessary to insist even more on that which is positive and active in it. If the documents speak only to the extent that the historian knows how to interrogate them, it is necessary to say that history is a response to a question posed; it rises up out of that which is deepest in the soul of the questioner. If he is a man and if he actually reaches the level of history (if he is not a mere academician, busy selecting materials for an eventual history), the historian will not pass his time in splitting hairs over questions which do not keep anyone from sleeping (according to the cruel expression of Jean Prévost). He will pursue, in his dialogue

with the past, the elaboration of *the* question which *does* keep *him* from sleeping, the central problem of his existence, the solution of which involves his life and entire person. I would gladly repeat here the well-known analysis of J. P. Sartre which serves as the basis of his definition of an "existential psycho-analysis": for the historian with an authentic vocation (for whom history is neither a pastime nor an accidental occupation), historical research is an empirical manifestation of that "original projection," that fundamental desire by which the human person incarnates itself and seeks to realize itself.

However, we must add an important clarification to this doctrine. We must not confuse the two levels of the ontological and the empirical. If, as Sartre says, "In each inclination, in each tendency" (I will add: in each occupation weighted with existential seriousness), "the person expresses itself entirely,"<sup>1</sup> we must not simply identify its "projection of being" with one or another of its empirical manifestations which are only a partial reflection of it, a particular incarnation, a symbolic expression.<sup>2</sup> It is because they have not always sufficiently emphasized this that philosophers have aroused justifiable hesitancy among professional historians. Giving in to the tendency to pathos which so profoundly impregnates the mode of expression of the existentialist philosophy of our time, the theoreticians of history (this is true of Heidegger as well as of Raymond Aron) have generally described the existential character of historical research in too emotional a way.

As they describe it, the dialogue with the past becomes, not without a certain lyricism, an anguished question that man, bent toward the future, and in the midst of his action, poses to his ancestors, to his brothers or models of an earlier

<sup>1</sup> *L'Être et le Néant*, p. 650.

<sup>2</sup> Sartre saw this clearly: *Ibid.*, p. 652.

period. Putting in relief the "temporality" of human reality and playing again on the ambiguity of the notion of history (if what we reconstruct was then the present of real men, our present, in which we realize our destiny in suffering and effort, in turn will become history for those who are to come), they have loved to describe the labor of the historian as an act by which "historic" man works at his own fulfillment. Thus they have sometimes seemed to identify—or at least they have not taken precautions sufficient to keep their readers from identifying—the existential projection (taken in all its ontological depth) and its expression (secondary and partial) on the level of empirical technique.

This was to open the door to serious confusions which, when extended from the level of speculation to that of practical applications, compromise the fecundity of the doctrine as well as its validity. We must not form too exalted an idea of history. We must not expect or demand too much from it. It is not from history as such that the fundamental problems of existence will receive their solution; the principal contribution of the new theory of history consists precisely in the fact, well established today, that the truth of its result (I understood by this the truth of the properly human values, not the truth about facts which it establishes) is given in its entirety in the doctrinal presuppositions which the subjectivity of the historian imposes from the beginning as the framework for his research. The truth of the history is a function of the truth of the philosophy professed (implicitly or not) by the historian.

In this respect we have shed many illusions, notably those which the 19th century had conceived about the proper fecundity of history. Renan, for example, believed that he could resolve historically the problem posed by the Christian challenge. We see clearly today that if

history enabled him to orchestrate (to make precise, bring to a point, express), still his solution had been reached at the beginning of his research by his adherence to the viewpoints of German romantic idealism. Alone and by itself, history cannot nourish an interior life, a culture; it cannot direct that life, become its soul or axis. This role can belong only to speculative thought; without seeking here for too much precision, let us simply say—to philosophy. If I may repeat an image which I have used elsewhere, just as epigraphy, archaeology, and numismatics are "auxiliary sciences" of history, history in its turn should be considered as an auxiliary discipline of thought. It feeds thought with empirical data; it enlarges the horizon, expands human experience, helps to transpose, to reconsider, to pose problems correctly; it proposes the types of solution possible, —but, by itself, it solves nothing.

*Subsidium philosophiae*, I would not say *ancilla*. At another, much more pedestrian level, I see an equal danger in paying too much attention to the existential character of historical research. Doubtless, to be human it should somehow answer to a fundamental question; but to be fruitful, to be truly history, it requires of the spirit a certain interior receptivity, a certain detachment. By going beyond subjectivity we come again upon the notion of disinterestedness. R. Aron has quite appropriately compared historical knowledge with the knowledge of another person, of which it is a particular case. The comparison is not only fruitful from the epistemological point of view; it sheds light on the actual practice of the historian. If history is this "encounter with another," it requires of the historian that at least for an instant he consent to go out of himself. If his mind is too much occupied with his own problems, he will not be sufficiently open to this new experience—and will not be an historian.

We have often experienced this; doctrinal preoccupations that are too intense sterilize historical research. Thus we know that the 17th century did much work on St. Augustine, but without as much profit as one might expect, because all—the Jansenists or Augustinians (Cardinal Noris, for example) just as their Jesuit adversaries—were too concerned with seeking an answer to the problems posed for their consciences by Molina or Jansenius to be able to rediscover and take up again the original thought as it had been formulated in the mind of the old Bishop of Hippo. We are here torn between two self-contradictory exigencies, value and authenticity; but this is because, once we have descended to the level of technical realization, we have passed imperceptibly from theory to practice, from logic to morality; it is the everyday prudence of the historian not to sacrifice without good reason one of these exigencies to the other.

More generally, it seems to me that our theorists have not sufficiently expressed the potentialities of this capital notion of "existential value." Our idea of it must not be too sordid, too immediately utilitarian. Let us repeat again here the parallel with the more general case of the knowledge of another; like history, and still more directly like love, friendship makes us go out of ourselves in order to go forward to the "encounter with the other." Who will deny the profound value which such an encounter possesses from an existential point of view? But, if I love my friend only for the services which he can render me (to me personally, or to our cause, our party), will I truly love him? An historical meeting with some friend of the past, a master or a hero, a certain cultural atmosphere, period or milieu, can have the same diffuse and yet profound character.

This is apparent even from the point of view which at first sight seems the most superficial. For some, history is only

an opportunity for esthetic contemplation; it is this for everyone at first. Certainly it offers us the richest repertoire of subjects for tragedy (or comedy) or for novels. One is continually surprised at the role that it has played as ferment for the creative imagination during the whole of literary history, from Homer to the present (Roger Martin du Gard would never have imagined the denouement of *L'Eté 1914* if he had not known of the historic suicide of Lauro de Bosis), and this is as true for realists like Balzac (consider the "keys" for *La Comédie Humaine*) as for the romantic writers like Stendhal. It suffices for us to return in thought to these great literary works to see that "esthetic contemplation" is without purpose only in appearance: who will deny the existential value of the subject of *The Charterhouse of Parma*?

Thus with a few retouches and clarifications, the post-Diltheyan theory of history appears fully able to account for the structure of our science. How we must hope that its practitioners, having abandoned their prejudices, consent to take account of it in their everyday procedure, for this logic leads quite naturally to a science of duties, to a practical ethic. The positivistic ethic available to the historian was, like its theory of knowledge, quite elementary; it is good, as everyone knows, to be orderly, precise, curious, prudent. From the moment that one recognizes that the history is worth no more than the historian one will become more demanding. Historical work will be fruitful in proportion to the human richness of the historian. The more intelligent, cultivated, rich in experience, open to things and to men that he is, the more he will become capable of understanding, of finding again in the past the equivalent of these values; the more his study will become rich and true. If "everything is potential evidence," he will have to know everything,



will have to have read everything (our conscience cannot be satisfied with an "exhaustive" bibliography: to have got hold of a brochure that could not be found is perhaps of less importance to the treatment of a question than to have rediscovered an idea in rereading Plato).

Of course, no matter what effort he makes, the unhappy historian will never carry out this endless program; the result is that his personal qualifications (his culture and temperament, with their positive attributes as well as their limits) will define his competence. Anyone at all cannot treat any subject whatsoever; he must first be able to *understand* it. A truism? The reader should be slow to make this objection. It is difficult for one who is not of the inner circle to imagine what the positivist blindness in this matter could be. Everyone has always been perfectly aware of the technical limitations of history (to study the history of Armenia it is necessary to begin by knowing Armenian), but for a long time there was a great indifference to its psychological requirements. How many otherwise meticulous works today appear to us to have failed simply because their author did not trouble himself to find out if he was suited interiorly, to the subject he was attempting! To do history of art, one must possess a rich and supple esthetic sensibility; to treat the history of Christianity, one must be capable of conceiving of what the religious phenomenon can be; more subtly, to understand the thought and actions of a man, one must have in common with him a certain psychological family-likeness which allows one to sense, to relive the ideas, convictions, sentiments and emotions that were his.

However banal and naive these reflections may seem, it suffices to have formulated them to see remarkable consequences appear; for instance, a reclassification of the virtues of the historian. In the positivist perspective the incon-

testably highest of virtues was certainly the critical spirit. The historian is above all one who does not let himself be easily led astray, one who knows how to ferret out error and fraud. This attitude was natural as long as one saw history primarily as research for the material "fact," objectively determined, situated and dated—which, we have already seen, constitutes only the skeleton, the substructure, of a true history.

There would be much to say about this exclusive emphasis on the critical attitude which expressed itself by a defense, in pseudo-Cartesian style, of the methodical doubt. There is too great a **tendency to imagine the progress of historical knowledge as a continuous victory of criticism**; in fact, this progress—it takes place in the form of a helix rather than in the form of a line!—knows as well, periods of "return to tradition" in which many extravagances are put aside. It would be highly interesting to assemble these episodes and to study the misdeeds of "hypercriticism" (a notion for the moment vague and completely intuitive, which it would be necessary to define with some logical rigor). I am not speaking here of fools (like that P. Hardouin who claimed that the bulk of our knowledge of ancient history rested on 13th century forgeries), nor of extreme cases, experiments carried out in paradoxical fashion for a polemical purpose (like the *Historical Doubts Relative to Napoleon Buonaparte*, by R. Whately—who in reality was addressing himself to Hume's *Essay on Miracles*, or the *Comme quoi Napoléon n'a jamais existé* by a certain J. B. Perès who, by reducing the Emperor to a solar myth, wished to show the methodological inconsistency of comparative mythology, as practiced by Dupuis); normal history, that of "serious" scholars ought periodically to renounce the pretended victories of hypercriticism; the history of Christianity by itself offers us numerous examples of this (who to-

day challenges the authenticity of the monuments discovered in the Roman catacombs, as was done in the 17th century? Who remembers the exegetical fantasies of the School of Tübingen? and so forth).

Like its logic, the ethic of positivism was not so much illegitimate as incomplete, always limiting itself to the preliminary stages of research, ignoring the subsequent, more decisive ones. It is quite true that in beginning a work the historian should be animated by an extremely alert critical spirit; but if this is his only emphasis, he risks drying out the noblest fibers. If he retains toward the human object of his research this same distrustful, quarrelsome attitude contracted in working on the documents, he will become totally incapable of adhering to, sharing, and recognizing genuine human values where they exist. The peril is not imaginary: it should suffice for me to refer the reader to the pages of *L'argent*, and especially of *L'argent suite*, so profound beneath the impassioned extravagance of its form, where Péguy denounces this critical history which can only destroy and deny, and which never succeeds in meeting grandeur, never uncovers anything but liars or puppets, knowing nothing of heroes or saints.<sup>3</sup>

But if, on the contrary, to be an historian is in the last analysis to *understand*, to penetrate to the interior of the soul of men of previous ages, to rediscover that which gave meaning and value to their thought, their actions and their life, then the supreme virtue of the historian will have to be sympathy,

that disposition of spirit which makes us connatural with another, which allows us to re-experience his passions, to re-think his ideas in the very light which made them known to him as Truth. No one can make himself an historian if he has not, in a very general way, this tendency to sympathy which enables him to share with the other; he must be able to make himself all things to all men, to open himself to everything human that he meets. As an historian of St. Augustine, I must be capable also of understanding the soul of his adversaries, Pelagius or Julian of Eclanum. To penetrate into the soul of Augustine profoundly, it is necessary that I possess, at least to a certain extent, something more than a general and elementary sympathy. The best historian of a man or of an epoch is one who, by his mental disposition and his own human experience, is most closely and intimately related to the spirit which one animated his hero or heroes. One cannot look for a completely satisfactory biography of Voltaire from a Catholic historian (though if he truly has an historian's temperament he can read with extreme interest and the greatest profit a *Life of Voltaire* written by a fully qualified biographer). On the other hand, I have always deplored the fact that the first and greatest historian of the Late Empire was that Voltairian, Gibbon. How could a man of the 18th century such as he, so totally out of sympathy with the Christian ideal (religion and barbarism are synonymous in his eyes) "understand" the civilization, so profoundly religious in inspiration, that was the Roman Empire after Constantine?

Sympathy, however, should not pass for the only virtue. The ideal historian is one who knows how to combine it with the most alert critical spirit. The two are not, in themselves, contradictory; for if sympathy compels me to love, it is a real and not an imaginary being

<sup>3</sup> It will be remembered that the point of departure of these invectives had been C. V. Langlois' laudatory review, in *La Revue Critique*, of Charles Babut's *Saint Martin*. This book could serve today as an example of the errors of hypercriticism based on incomprehension. What remains of the work after the double execution carried out by the Bollandist, H. Delchaye, and by Camille Jullian?

which is the object of my desire. I wish to know this chosen object as it really was. Passion, far from blinding, can make the critical spirit still more demanding. As a matter of fact, these different virtues are unequally represented in each scholar, but the progress of history is the result of a collective effort. If this progress is somewhat uneven, it is because the excesses of one historian will elicit the correction of another. I mentioned above the rectifications which follow periods of hypercriticism; conversely, history benefits from the harvest of the critical historian who performs the useful task of arousing dormant sympathies. In his *Martin Luther* (a model of the fully comprehensive monograph), Lucien Febvre has clearly shown how much history has profited from the great work of demolition that was the *Luther* of Fr. Denifle. But let us take a closer look: if the subject has been completely renewed, this is not because Fr. Denifle was particularly critical of the founder of Protestantism. It is above all because he revived the critical spirit of Lutheran historians and called them back from hagiography to history. If the work of Denifle has nevertheless contributed positively to the progress of the knowledge of Luther, this is to the extent that his personal competence as a medievalist, and his own experience as a religious and a Catholic historian, led this 19th century Dominican to sympathize in spite of himself with the 15th century Augustinian.

If it is the personal qualification which thus guarantees the authenticity and the depth of historical work, nothing is more vain or hypocritical than the posture so long imposed on the historian: a frozen attitude, unimpassioned and impersonal, in the face of his subject, an "objective tone." This style is still with us. If, by chance, a scholar, devoted to logical rigor, dares to explain his subjective postulates and, putting himself on the

scene, to say: "I was led to ask myself if . . . I therefore sought to find out if . . . I thought that . . .," the critical school immediately grows indignant and puts on a hurt look at this lack of taste, this invading I! Of course, here too, there is an elementary level of truth; history should avoid the style of both the pamphlet and the panegyric, for a certain moderation of tone helps express and guarantee the weighing of judgment. But this is only the first step. At a higher level, since it is established that historical knowledge is a function of the soul of the historian, it is completely illogical and verging on the absurd to claim to eliminate this variable.

I will go a long way in this direction. It has always been agreed that an honest man of learning ought to provide his readers with the means of judging the validity of his affirmations. Hence the notes at the bottom of the page, the precise reference to documents. It is one of the unquestionable merits of positivism to have taught us to be very demanding in what concerns the minutiae of these references. But it will no longer suffice to guarantee that one has correctly tracked down or transcribed a source. It will be necessary, furthermore, to let the reader know if one has understood it, or rather (since all understanding is necessarily directed, thus partial) how one has understood it. Scientific honesty will thus demand of the author that he present himself, define his own orientation of thought, make his postulates explicit (to the extent that this is possible). He should show himself in action and have us assist in the genesis of his work, to see why and how he has chosen and limited his subject, what he was looking for in it, what he has found in it; he should have us share his interior itinerary (for all historical research, if it is truly fruitful, implies a progress in the very soul of the author: the "encounter with another" transforms him,

leads him to unexpected discoveries). In a word, he should furnish us with all the materials that a scrupulous introspection can bring to his "existential psychoanalysis."

I shall have no scruple in borrowing this precious idea from Sartre if it is always understood that I transpose it, *mutatis mutandis*, to the empirical and technical level. Usually this introspection, coming from so close at hand, will not be enough to define the direction of an historical work. The most fundamental postulates, the essential choices, are too deeply rooted in the author's being for him to be able to judge himself entirely. Nor can he judge himself immediately; experience shows that at the end of several years the development of the historian's interior evolution will give him, along with the necessary distance, a detachment that is almost objective and which will remain associated with a direct comprehension. Even if it does not suffice for a complete explanation, this retrospection, if it is straightforward and courageous, will be able to furnish elements extremely valuable for the evaluation of the work.

It is for criticism to carry out what the author is unable to finish; it has taught the reader nothing useful if it has not succeeded in analyzing the mentality of the historian, has not defined the area accessible to his perception, discerned the secret orientation of his thought. Here I am defining an ideal, without concealing from myself that its practical realization will always run into obstacles that are, in part, insurmountable. Deprived of the experimental verification that psychoanalysis in the proper sense finds (or thinks it finds) in its therapeutic efficacy, our "existential psychoanalysis" will often be in danger of going off into unverifiable hypotheses: are we not deciphering secret intentions, so much more significant the more deeply they are buried in the unconscious of

the scholar? These hypotheses, furthermore, are sometimes so unexpected that they easily appear to the subject of such investigations to be unbearably indiscreet.<sup>4</sup> Matters are such that I hesitate to advise anyone to indulge in such efforts about an author still living or too close to us, for his existential critique would risk falling under laws forbidding abuse and defamation! But it is especially with the great historians of the past that the work is worth doing. Being farther from us, their intimate structure is more readily apparent; and furthermore, we often possess the means of tracing the development of this structure. But neither the practical difficulties, nor the exaggerated and ludicrous character of the first attempts which have already been made<sup>5</sup> should make us doubt the

<sup>4</sup> At the risk of seeming to persecute his memory, let us reconsider the case of Charles Babut. One would have given serious offense to this conscientious scholar by diagnosing in him a "Camisard complex" and by explaining that he unconsciously avenged himself on the orthodox bishops and the popes of the 4th-5th centuries for the persecutions inflicted on his Protestant ancestors. Nevertheless this is the most likely hypothesis and the least ungracious to him which is able to take account of the systematic and often disconcerting lack of understanding which he shows towards his heroes.

<sup>5</sup> The most characteristic attempt that I can cite is that of Daniel Guérin at the end of his great work on *La Lutte des classes sous la Première République, Bourgeois et bras nus (1793-1797)*. He there reviews the principal historians of the French Revolution and tries to judge each of them critically, discerning the theoretical presuppositions of his research. It is not simply a matter of calling attention to the divergent value judgments which have been made about the great men of that epoch (was Robespierre a great man? a bloody tyrant? etc.), but, in a much more useful fashion, of showing how the orientation and the valid field of observation of each history was determined by the "theory" of its author. Unfortunately, this laudable attempt has been carried out with the primitive dogmatism and the baseness in use of insult that the French Marxists, Stalinists or Trotskyites, have so tirelessly borrowed from the Soviet critics. It is painful to hear of our late

legitimacy of such a "psychoanalysis" or the insufficiency of all criticism that is not carried to this level.

But far more than a production conceived for the public, historical research is an interior adventure in which the person of the historian is engaged in its entirety. It is the effort of a soul which seeks to resolve a problem which for it is fundamental, and which puts to the past of humanity a question whose solution—by means often circuitous and mysterious—is of significance for its destiny. Therefore, the historian should be less preoccupied with elaborating a "disinterested" knowledge, "objective," "valid for all" (cruel and deceptive words) than in first answering the question: "Where is the truth?" and in arriving at a knowledge that will be completely valid *for himself*.

Weighted with this existential value, research will be only more rigorous. Since Plato, we have known that there is no more demanding judge of each of us than his own conscience, and the statement is still true of logic (it is thus that Plato understood it) and not only of ethics. In fact, if one considers the conditions in which the historian works, no outside supervision can rival

mentor, A. Mathiez, that, because he was a functionary, he was in the pay of the capitalist Republic (was he not rather a victim of it than a partisan?). It is naive to claim that all the bourgeois historians "have something to hide" (in strict logic it is necessary to say that their position necessarily hides something from them) and that it is the Marxist historian who has nothing to hide. From his point of view, certainly! He only sees what his point of view allows him to see. Logically, there is no privileged theory. In fact, Daniel Guérin shows himself as incapable as a Voltaire of understanding Christian fact. When he meets (apropos of the failure of the *décadi*) the corresponding failure of the six day week in Russia and the re-establishment of Sunday, he does not really succeed in explaining it. The remarkable persistence of Christianity in the U.S.S.R. is outside his intelligible field.

the exigencies of the conscience of the scholar, that solitary witness to the struggle against the unknown and doubt, to the delicate elaboration of conviction. This is because the domain of historical truth is far more complex than that of elementary physics—the physics of bachelors of philosophy!—, as a function of which the positivist theory of history was elaborated. Everything is much more delicate here, involving nuances difficult to communicate. As I have said, it is the totality of the experience, the total culture of the historian which is at work, which furnishes him with his documents, his arguments; it is he alone who can dictate to himself the best way to proceed.

Contrary to the stubborn fears of pedestrian minds, this existential conception of history undermines neither its truth nor its fecundity. It is necessary to consider the objective of history: an enlargement of interior experience, of the knowledge of man, by the discovery of the other. What the historian hopes, and realizes, is not to verify what he already knows, but to encounter what is new. Let us not make an absurdity of one of the favorite formulas of R. Aron: "Theory precedes history." He means by "theory" the ensemble of cadres that the personal structure of the historian imposes *a priori* on his research, and in this sense his formula is perfectly valid. It is not valid if, by theory, one means an hypothesis all worked out, which the historian simply wishes to verify. This is the position which Denis de Rougemont stated in so straightforward a form that it became paradoxical<sup>6</sup>: "the historian

<sup>6</sup> In a polemic which pitted me against him in the review *Esprit* in 1939 concerning his book, *Love in the Western World*, to my eyes the very type of pseudo-historical work: a thesis (love-passion is an invention of the Cathars) which one labors *a posteriori* to verify by "facts," of which none is the object of a sufficiently generous comprehension.



composes history with facts as the poet composes a sonnet." History is something entirely different! It is receptivity, submission to the unexpected, openness to the other, joy of discovery and of astonishment.

The romantic type of visionary who, instead of going forward to meet the past (a past of which he ought to know but one thing, that it will be *other*), already knows what the past is, will never be a true historian. His contact with the documents is vitiated in advance; he will necessarily be led to choose, militate, and deform them in function of his thesis. There is a whole family of spirits who are prone to this danger. Do I dare to say that they are found particularly among men of a predominantly philosophical culture who, eager to regain that domain in which the pure idea is elaborated, often show themselves impatient of the long delays demanded for the authentic discovery of contingent facts? Since they are in possession of a sure doctrine of the world and of man, they know in advance what ought to have been, and are always tempted to project over the past an *a priori* history more rational than the real!

The same danger of *a priori* dogmatism also lies in wait for the aging historian, if he loses his ability to react freshly, and ossifies the categories in which once he had been justified in fixing the results of his study. Thus I cannot quite share all the admiration that my elders have for the great historian that was Henri Pirenne. Too young, I had not been able to witness the creative phase of his famous hypotheses (cities and merchants, Mohammed and Charlemagne); I came across them when they were already fossilized, become instead of hypotheses, "theories" (in the romantic sense) proposed to reality and verified, no matter what the cost.<sup>7</sup> Since the greatest histori-

ans have sometimes failed in this respect, one can appreciate the grandeur of this new ideal of a truly existential history, —which, to be such, must be true and not just consoling.

It might perhaps be objected that the historian who is preoccupied with writing a history that is valid, first of all, for himself is going to shut himself up in a useless solitude. This is not so, for he is a man and his history will be so much the more real the more truly he is a man, incarnate in the life of his times, gripped by the great problems which are those of his fellow men. There is still the romantic idol of the personality that fulfills itself by isolating itself. The truth is something else; it is in the rough contact with common life that the "I" completes itself (for one who understands it in authentic fashion, the Christian theology of monastic isolation is directly related to the social conception of the Church).

This is why historical work in which I shall have sought to express, in all its finesse and complexity, my experience of the past, even if at first I have wished to express it only for myself, will be quite naturally useful to other men who are also sensitive to the human values which have held my attention. My work will be accessible to all those—let us be precise without being ironic—who will be *capable* of understanding it, that is to say all those who are related to my own mentality by a brotherhood of spirit. My work will not be equally profitable to

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with respect to "de l'état de l'instruction des laïques à l'époque mérovingienne" (this is the title of a study of Pirenne, published in the *Revue Bénédictine* 1934); since according to his "theory" the end of antiquity was to be postponed until after the Arab conquest, the author finds witnesses testifying, under the Merovingians, to the existence of "lay" schools of the ancient type; but all the texts cited are taken in the wrong sense and should, on the contrary, be understood as referring to "clerical" schools of a distinctly medieval type!

<sup>7</sup> The path of my research once crossed his

all: my friends, my companions in battle (whose problems are my problems, of whom, while working, I will have as often thought as of myself), those will profit from it almost as much as I; others, alas, too far from our milieu (and thus from our ways of thought and even from our vocabulary), will no longer under-

stand me or, what is worse, will misunderstand.

*Non ego loquar omnibus, sed mihi, sed tibi, sed his.*

But does not the same destiny await every book, every work of art, every thought, every human work?

*Translated by* JAMES F. McCUE

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# Notes and Reviews

## WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS

Serenity is the word for Fr. John Courtney Murray's book (Sheed & Ward, 1960, \$5): serenity and eloquence. The precision of nuance with which the texture of these essays unfolds could come only from an ordered and richly inventive intellect. The argument is fashioned with the same lack of stridency and the same measured composure which always commends the best Catholic theological reflection, at least initially, to the Protestant reader whose studies carry him more often to works which bear the marks of a more intent and urgent style. And as in all good writing, the mood of Murray's essays coheres almost perfectly with the tenor of their content. In him American Catholicism has produced far more than a persuasive interpreter of the Church's "American experience." It has provided for all of us a ranking social philosopher and a masterful defender of "the tradition of reason" in political theory. For this reason, the popular "typing" of Murray as the spokesman of the American pattern in Church-State relations is unfortunate. His contribution goes much beyond this.

Little need be said about the essays in this volume dealing with Catholic education and with the responsibilities and limits of the civil society in questions of public morale. Murray probably articulates what will certainly appear eventually, with minor reservations perhaps, as the American "consensus," to use one of his own favorite words. Many Protestants have already expressed comparable views and have begun to recognize that the dialogue with Catholicism must now proceed at a level somewhat deeper than disputes over school busses. In the matter of

freedom of religion and toleration, for example, few informed Protestants now harbor any real apprehensiveness about the growing influence of Catholicism in America. Both the fact and the desirability of religious freedom are secured. On the important question of the *basis* of toleration, however, much serious disagreement remains and considerable further discussion can be expected.

Speaking as a Catholic, Father Murray sees the religious pluralism as real but views it as "lamentable." This means, he thinks that the "highest ground available for the Catholic in his attitude toward the religion clauses of the Constitution is a moral commitment to them as articles of peace in a pluralist society." For the Protestant, on the other hand, commitment to these principles springs from a somewhat deeper level of his religious faith. Father Murray underestimates the theological depth of this attitude when he says, ". . . any final validation of the First Amendment . . . —no matter by whom undertaken, be he Protestant, Catholic, Jew or secularist—must make appeal to the three arguments . . . of social necessity, the rightfulness within our own circumstances . . . and the lessons of experience." These certainly constitute relevant and convincing factors. But they clearly lack the *theological* grounding which an effectual doctrine of toleration should exhibit.

For the Protestant, religious liberty, which cannot be considered apart from separation of Church and State, is one of the rights conferred by God on man. Its guarantee therefore becomes a religious obligation which goes far beyond such justifications as social neces-

sity and circumstance. Historically, as Ernst Troeltsch has indicated, these rights found their way into the American Constitution "from Puritan religious principles." It was only in virtue of being thus "put on a religious basis," Troeltsch continues, "that these demands became absolute . . . and required theoretic legal exposition. . . . What the purely practical English law . . . had either not felt to be necessary or not succeeded in securing, was now secured by the energy of a principle based on religious conviction."\*

When Troeltsch goes on to explain that it was not Calvinist Puritanism but left-wing "independent Puritanism" which spawned these "rights of man" (later extended to include the inviolability of life and property), the place of Roger Williams emerges from the somewhat confused role in which Father Murray has cast him. Williams was not, of course, a "rigidly orthodox Calvinist," as Father Murray claims. Always restless with any rigid theology, he became a Baptist, and finally would call himself only a "seeker." In his justifiable eagerness to divest Williams of the secular-liberal ideology which has mistakenly been attributed to him recently, Murray forgets that the theology of left-wing Puritan independency, which Williams undoubtedly represents, did exercise considerable influence on the First Amendment. It was not the only influence, but when Murray declares that "one must rule out the whole idea that any theologians stood at the origin of this piece of legislation," his assertion can be accepted only with severe qualification.

But there are other theological roots for the rights of man, for toleration and religious liberty. They go back not only to Penn and Williams but to Thomas and Bellarmine. This may dispel the

puzzlement some readers will have about Jesuit Murray's undisguised fascination for Roger Williams, despite the latter's lusty railing at "popery." It is not the first time that the ecclesiastical left and right have found themselves in unsought mutuality. It happened when, during the Short Parliament, Henry Parker suggested that all religious persuasions deserved the Crown's protection "except papists and anabaptists." It appeared again when Baptist Rhode Island, Quaker Pennsylvania and Catholic Maryland became the first colonies to provide complete religious freedom.

This peculiar correspondence springs in part from the historical fact that both traditions suffered from the Throne and Altar alliance of the post-Reformation era when toleration of religious deviants was apparently *not* a "social necessity." One tradition defends the distinction between Church and State because the Sacral Community transcends national boundaries; the other because the human soul and conscience possess a God-given sanctity which government is not permitted to coerce. Both have at times violated their own principles. But in our century, when more men have suffered for their belief than perhaps at any previous time, we desperately need all the support for freedom of conscience which can be mustered. For this reason it is all the more unfortunate that Father Murray, despite a promising section on *res sacra homo*, specifically declines to anchor religious freedom in religious truth. His unwillingness to "make a religion out of freedom of religion" or to "believe in it as an article of faith" may be understandable. But freedom of religion is a religious concern, as the Belgian Catholic, Father Augustin Léonard, O. P., insists when he describes it as a principle based "not on a superficial opportunism that

\* *Protestantism and Progress* (Beacon Press).



seeks to adapt itself to political changes in the modern world," but as "a principle, permanently and finally established." "Even supposing faith were to know again a time of triumph," Father Léonard continues, "religious freedom would continue to be a sacred duty."\*

Such a clear statement from across the Atlantic should serve to divest American Catholics of the innocent belief that they are "ahead" of European Catholics on this issue. They are not. Toleration requires theological as well as prudential defence. We can well wish that, as the principal American voice in this conversation, Father Murray might, without sacrificing eloquence, bring more *theological ardor* to bear on the problem.

When he moves to his discussion of the tradition of reason in politics, Murray's serenity again becomes a highly appropriate vehicle for his argument. "My proposition," he says, "is that only the theory of natural law is able to give an account of the public moral experience. . . ." And the basic assertion of natural law, he continues, is "that the dictates of common human reason are the dictates of God . . . Their ultimate origin is divine, though the mode of their knowing is human and rational." Sometimes Murray discusses such issues as economic policy, Communist imperialism, and the uses of force as a spokesman of this important moral tradition. At other times his arguments do not so much apply the tradition as they decry the *lack* of a viable moral consensus, in America, the need for some kind of a return to natural law theory. His insight finds some corroboration among various other recent writers, including Leo Strauss in *Natural Right and History* (Chicago) and Alfred Cobban in his Harvard lectures, *In Search of Hu-*

*manity* (Brazilier). Both have called us to take up again from the wreckage of political positivism that neglected Western tradition of what Cobban calls "transforming morals into politics, which still remains politics." Both decry the decline of reason in political theorizing.

Certainly the need for an intellectual formulation and defence of our basic values is most pressing. A previous question, however, is where do we look for those moral certitudes, for the kind of truths our forefathers held to be "self-evident"? Where can we find a source for renewal of the "tradition of reason" in politics?

Here the answers vary. It is indeed somewhat ironic that the defenders of self-evidence in moral truth disagree on its locus. Strauss would by-pass the Catholic tradition of natural law and return to the classical tradition. Naturally Father Murray prefers the "tradition that has been sustained and developed by the Catholic Church." Cobban doubts that this course could provide an adequate base today, mainly because the divine authority which is its ultimate source no longer commands widespread assent. He suggests, rather, that the Enlightenment of the 18th century become the starting point of an effective stimulus to social morality, a solution Father Murray would certainly question.

Such disagreement within the "tradition of reason" itself calls to mind the objection Protestant theologians have often raised to Catholic natural law theories: that they seem to lack the very universality and potent intelligibility which their advocates claim as the most commendable feature of the natural law. The theological point at issue is of course an ancient one: to what extent is reason itself affected by the Fall? For Protestants the self, being

\* Cf his "Religious Tolerance and Civil Freedom," *Cross Currents*, Winter 1955.

sinful, is tempted to use reason to justify historically conditioned and often even unjust ends. Western history literally brims with examples of the utilization of "natural law" to advance politically suspect purposes. Even Father Murray's thoroughly intelligent re-casting of natural law theory does not escape some serious pitfalls. For example, his desire to re-establish a kind of "Lords Spiritual," consisting of "wise and honest men" who will articulate a public consensus, overlooks the sad fact that even the wise and honest have frequently become the self-deluded victims of their own interest.

But this is not the time to re-state the classical Protestant objections to natural law. I believe Protestant ethicists are ready for serious conversation with Catholics on the role of reason in bringing morality to bear on public policy. The influence of Reinhold Niebuhr, himself a tireless critic of natural law ethics, has exposed much of the Protestant apprehensiveness in this matter as a deposit of liberal sentimentality with its characteristic suspicion of any kind of law at all. However, Protestants insist that we should not be sentimental about the efficacy of reason either. This was the Enlightenment's main error. Reason can and must be used in politics. It must be used with rigor and devotion. But it must be used with a full recognition of its limitations and (to use a word Father Murray heartily dislikes) its "ambiguity." We must use reason as those who, as Christians, are fully aware of the element of tragedy in all moral behavior.

It is just at this point that Father Murray's initially enviable serenity becomes misleading. Complicated moral situations, he contends, "are not ambiguous." They are "merely complicated." Would that it were so! Then indeed Father Murray's corps of "wise

and honest" men could perhaps, by careful reflection on the intelligible moral law, extricate us from our pit. But our moral crises are *not* "merely complicated." Complexity is, after all, an intellectual category, and moral problems are more than intellectual. It is here that one somehow misses, on Father Murray's balanced pages, the note of honest anguish which, perhaps because of the sinful division of Christendom, has not been fully integrated into his thinking. One misses the candid willingness of a Kierkegaard to wrestle with the ethically ironic or of a Pascal to explore the delicacy of self-deception. How odd, and even disturbing, that different Christian traditions can live in the same world but in different "histories." We know the varied strands which have been woven into that particular "history" by which the other tradition defines its present. We read them and love them. But somehow they have not yet fully become "our history," as Richard Niebuhr puts it.

Father Murray speaks for one version of the Christian story, to whose authenticity the centuries have borne witness. But it is one version. Surely Father Murray must recognize that for St. Paul, at least, the ethical struggle, the "war in his members," was more than "merely complicated." It required more than wisdom and honesty. It required grace, not just as added insight but as the forgiveness which enables us to act even though we know our most reasonable behavior can never be entirely free from sinful self-interest. No simple version of the Christian story can fully illuminate that strange creature whose moral life contains both complicated and ambiguous elements.

Consequently the application of morality in politics desperately needs *both* the Catholic respect for reason *and* the Protestant awareness of its limitations

in the hands of sinful men. Only in this way can the twin demons of moral arrogance and ethical relativism be avoided. It is not just the embarrassment of disunity but the aching need for moral consensus which requires that the Catholic-Protestant dialogue be approached with a sense of seriousness. Protestants, for their part, must see that although man is indeed *justitia simul peccator*, a saved sinner, he is saved. He is required and empowered by God to act morally. Catholics should recognize that the revival of the tradition of reason cannot be expected to succeed if it requires a whole culture to return to the philosophical style of a previous period, as though the Reformation and the Enlightenment had never happened. They have happened. And the Western moral tradition to which we must find renewed access will necessarily include them, as well as that "ancient tradition sustained by the Catholic Church" which gave them birth.

Perhaps Father Murray succeeds as the theoretician of toleration. Perhaps not. In any case, his contribution is a prodigious one. But the pressures of the

times are forcing us as Christians to something infinitely more necessary and dangerous than mere toleration or even "moral consensus." The spiritual poverty of our age cannot be met by Christians simply learning how to tolerate each other. We need more than Murray's provisions for "creeds at war intelligibly." Murray claims that Protestantism and Catholicism are in "radical disagreement," that they are "systems of belief that bear to each other only an analogical relationship." I disagree and I think many Catholics will also disagree. I hope so. As Catholics and Protestants, our disagreements are grave, our disunity perfidious. But we will affirm in faith a unity which cannot be ultimately frustrated. It is God's work, not ours. For this reason, the fact that we are only now finding reasons to tolerate each other is cause for repentance, not celebration. The age of toleration is past. The age of dialogue and, hopefully, the "ecumenical age" has begun. May it produce thinkers of the quality of Fr. Murray to meet its own problems.

HARVEY COX

## CHRISTIAN WITNESS AND INTER-CULTURAL ACCORDS

There is every evidence that the pace of *conflict resolution* will be stepped up considerably in the 1960's. It is significant that more scholarship is arriving at a point of greater objectivity concerning the fundamental intercultural and international tensions of our age, rather than merely serving one or the other protagonists in a divided world.

In a very practical sense, Christian witness has been emerging as a basic technique in conflict resolutions. A systematic attempt, though by no means the only one, at manifesting this attitude of Christian involvement in the contemporary world can be seen in

the work of the (Protestant) World's Student Christian Federation (13, rue Calvin, Geneva, Switzerland). This year's conference, held in Strasbourg, France, July 15-31, 1960, was concerned with "Christ's Ministry to the World and Our Calling Today." Among the 800 delegates were Christians reporting from countries where they are an exposed minority, as, for example, Elisabeth Adler and Johannes Hamel of East Germany. "Witness in a Marxist Society" (Hamel is rector of the Theological Seminary, Nauburg/Saale and author of *A Christian in East Germany*. Cf. Paul Oestreicher, "Germany: A

Church Divided," FRONTIER, Spring, 1960, pp. 47-50); Kenneth Cragg and the Coptic priest Makary el Souriany, "The Encounter of Christianity and Islam"; Henry Makula from Northern Rhodesia and many Africans and Asians, "Witness amidst Racial and Cultural Tensions"; José M. Bonino of Argentina and many Latin Americans, "Witness in a de-Christianized Continent"; Joseph Hromadka and Jan Mirejowsky from Prague, "Witness to the Atheists." While fervor and hope animated the participants, it was clear that witness is not easy. It implies suffering and being misunderstood; even being a "failure in the world." It can lead to grave conflicts of conscience. Can witness become institutionalized as a Church attitude or is it essentially to remain an individual apostolate with all its problems? Aren't Christians terribly divided? This Catholic observer asked such questions.

A tragic dimension of witness was revealed by the position of the Lutheran bishop Dibelius (Cf. Otto Dibelius, "Témoignage protestant," DOCUMENTS, 3/1960, pp. 259-71 and Gunther Feuser, "La jeunesse allemande derrière le rideau de fer," *Ibid.*, pp. 272-83). A more hopeful dimension is presented by Hélène Peltier-Zamoyaska, "Quel Témoignage peut toucher les esprits soviétiques?", INFORMATIONS CATHOLIQUES INTERNATIONALES, April, 1960, revealing Russian university students' attitudes as being at one and the same time extremely confused about Christianity and very much alive with a genuine idealism and sense of human solidarity, and thus open unexpectedly to Christian witness.

Witness is closely associated with mission, and hence would imply an appreciative knowledge of intercultural history. A very useful and ecumenical

handbook is Philippe Maury, ed., *History's Lessons for Tomorrow's Missions*, originally published as a special issue of the WSCF's quarterly THE STUDENT WORLD (subscriptions can be ordered at \$2.50 from the National Student Christian Federation, 475 Riverside Dr., N. Y. 27, N. Y.), The thirty contributing scholars—Protestants, Catholics, Orthodox—attempted, with the tools of scientific history, to depict moments of particular importance in the history of the communion of saints, in order "to call people to find their place in the great effort which the Church of Jesus Christ has been making for twenty centuries, to understand the mission entrusted to it by God and to fulfill it in our changing world" (p. 16). Though addressed to lay readers, the chapters contain a wealth of material and references. Among the contributors are: Prof. John Foster (Glasgow) with rare information on the early Church of East Asia; Prof. L. E. Browne (Leeds), very stimulating on the failure of Christianity under Muslim rule—"... the Muslims laughed at them and they dwindled away" (p. 64), "... the abandonment by the Christians of their sense of spiritual power, and their dependence upon the power of the sword" meant the end of Eastern Churches (p. 68-69); Prof. Ramon Sugranyes de Franch (General Secretary of *Pax Romana*) with new interpretations of the 13th century, especially on the personality and work of Ramon Lull; F. H. Lapargneur (Dominican in Brazil) on Latin America, especially on las Casas and the Jesuit communist Republic of the Guaranis; Prof. K. S. Latourette on St. Francis Xavier; Prof. J. Meyendorff (St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, N. Y.) and Prof. N. Struve (Sorbonne) insisting on the missionary character of the Russian Orthodox Church, providing much factual detail; Prof. S. E.

Ahlstrom (Yale) on the American frontier and the Protestant missions; H. Kraemer (Netherlands) on colonialism and missions. A. Rétif, S.J. (*Etudes*) with a French Roman Catholic bibliography, and a Protestant French, English and German bibliography on missions conclude this helpful volume.

"The Church can bear a faithful witness to the Lordship of Christ over the industrial world only through participating in his humble presence as a servant of this world" (p. 235); not by proclaiming and dominating, but by *diakonia*, *koinonia* and *kerygma*. This is the burden of the more personal experiences and reflections of Philippe Maury, *Politics and Evangelism* (N. Y., Doubleday, 1959, pp. 120, \$2.95). Maury, who came up through the French Resistance, is critical of both Marxist and bourgeois conformity (p. 30); of christianizing institutions (p. 36); of Roman Catholicism (p. 41, etc.). And he asserts that "Christian eschatology leaves no room whatever for the notion of either a Christian civilization or a Christian political party" (p. 83). His positive emphasis is on the ministry of reconciliation: "Nations will co-exist without being able to unite and the task of the Church will be to call them to a co-existence" (p. 118); . . . "The Church can only fulfil such a ministry if it has guarded its freedom and avoided identification with one of the conflicting parties" (p. 119).

Nevertheless, the fervor of witness needs scholarly material which might support and clarify its task. The remarkable and encyclopedic study by Adda B. Bozeman, *Politics and Culture in International History* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1960, 560 pp., \$10.) is certainly a major tool in this undertaking. It is addressed to

the intellectual and political crises that have ensued, and will continue

to ensue, from the close encounter of the greatly different and often antagonistic civilizations of the world, and to the need of locating principles of agreement that are more widely meaningful than the ones presently in use. It will do so by reviving and reactivating those collective memories of mankind that seem to be the most promising sources of international cooperation today, and by recapturing those moments in recorded time in which men of different continents and cultures succeeded in transcending their local environment (p. 14).

The study traverses the ancient Near East, India, Greece, Rome, China, Islam, Byzantium and Europe, examining cultural affinities and peculiarities, and arriving at some categorical conclusions. We are victims to the misconception that the legal and political ideals of the West can be understood and adopted by non-American-European peoples. The national, constitutional and democratic state is a peculiar product of our own culture. Yet, the entire world has been covered by a Western legacy, causing a clash between it and indigenous patterns of life. Africans and Asians are beginning to resurrect the realities and myths that antedated their knowledge and acceptance of the Western ways. This complex encounter of civilizations was further complicated by Russia's propagation of communism. The cultural frustrations caused by the impact of Western ways lead non-Western peoples to seek security in their own ethnocentric traditions. (Incidentally, the finer shades of this process can be detected in Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, just re-issued in paperback by Anchor Books, 426 pp., \$1.45).

While non-Western peoples in their frustrations can retreat into their own cultural folds, albeit often wounded, or accept communism, the Western peoples, who have unleashed modern times, cannot retreat. They are more deeply



affected by the present disharmony between the wished-for global value scales (i.e., international unity, peace and prosperity based on Western models), and the various actual local value scales, the non-Western traditions in various stages of confusion, and revolution, to which, paradoxically, Westerners themselves had supplied the initial motive power. The outlook for the world appears to be more, rather than less division. Bozeman invites "the thoughtful to resume the creative quest for intercultural accords."

Some unorthodox prognostications of more, rather than less troubles ahead, are psychologically hard on challenge-shy Westerners, and do not sufficiently explain that Western patterns are fervidly espoused—perhaps in a love-hate pattern—the world over. Western science and technology are spreading into Eastern Europe, to Asia, Africa and Latin America, and some thinkers attach great hopes to this process. Herbert Wender explains its roots since the Renaissance (*The Growth of Modern Thought and Culture*, N. Y., Philosophical Library, 1959, 215 pp., \$3.75), and concludes that

we have seen that national prosperity frequently precedes political democracy and that economic revolution promotes political reform. . . . Industrialization and wealth, leisure and urbanity . . . will induce the growth of thought, of fine literature, and of high art. The rigidly disciplined and materialistic communist world will some day learn that people cannot live by bread alone. . . . Cerebration coupled with the love of science must ultimately beget inquiring minds, resentment of regimentation and the repudiation of a robotistic existence (p. 215).

This automatism and cultural optimism does not stand critical analysis based on the evidences of contemporary industrial society in the West. This

is also made clear in a very careful analysis by Adam B. Ulam, *The Unfinished Revolution* (An Essay on the Sources of Influences of Marxism and Communism, N. Y., Random House, 1960, 299 pp., \$5). Ulam avoids the cliché that Communism is the bogeyman of our troubles. Rather, he stresses the insight that every society reaching for industrialization and modernization has its "Marxist" period. "Marxism to a remarkable degree reproduces the social psychology of the period of transition from a pre-industrial to an industrial society" (p. 8). This thesis is an important corrective to Bozeman's. Therefore, argues Ulam, one way to help such societies in transition is to speed them through this phase. The English 19th-century example looms large. Economic dynamism in the shape of conscious industrialization of the world is to bridge divisive reality, because

it was the historical discovery of early liberalism that conscious materialism, not as a philosophical creed but as a way of life, is not only an innocent, but a necessary prerequisite for a political realization of those spiritual and humanitarian instincts that have been with mankind since civilization began (p. 298).

Not only does this assertion fail to stand critical evaluation, but Ulam contradicts his hope in the "continued emphasis on production and technology," when he explains how the Soviet Union's restlessness in the search for a justification of its ideology and a rationale for continued totalitarianism may be driven "by an ideological compulsion much more complex than the now obsolete dream of world revolution, to adventurous and aggressive foreign policies" (p. 281).

The value of these insights, although estimable, is limited by their single-factor conceptualization. Scholars will

have to continue to struggle through such disciplined monographic approaches to an equally disciplined, but wider appreciation of the multifarious challenges of revolutionary times. Could it be that the preoccupation of any society with material ends and means to the "temporary" exclusion of "values" brings not harmony, but catastrophe? Unless industrialization is viewed as a cure-all, is there not a need for Christian witness as to the values which must govern all aspects of life in order to help the so-called underdeveloped areas, as well as Russia and China, to find their equilibrium? A recent paperback re-issue of Nicolas Berdyaev's *The Origins of Russian Communism* (Ann Arbor, Michigan Univ. Press, 1960, 191 pp., \$1.65), can help us find the right perspective. Staughton Lynd's attempt to combine the insights of monographs on a complex question, "How the Cold War Began," (COMMENTARY, Nov., 1960), will also repay attention. The essay of Jean Conilh, "La politique du genre humain," ESPRIT, (March, 1960), leads us back to the point raised at the outset: witness based on competent knowledge in the history of cultures and comparative religions.

If Bozeman is correct in her assessment of the return by non-Western peoples to their cultures and if Ulam and Wender are right in their conviction that a triumphantly industrial man will turn to the higher things in life, it is already time to ask which possible final "values" could instill meaning to the life of man in all societies. But what *can* religions really offer, suffering so badly themselves? Hans-Werner Gensiche, "Der Säkularismus und die Religionen," ZEITWENDE, Feb., 1960, analyzes the struggle for survival of primitive religions as well as the great Asiatic ones. He concludes that the remnants of all religions will enter a dialogue which will greatly affect the West.

For many Christians in the West this is astounding news. The most competent and exhaustive available presentation of this new dimension of non-Western contributions to Western self-realization is Thomas Ohm, O.S.B., *Asia Looks at Western Christianity* (Herder and Herder, 1959, 252 pp., \$4.75). This is a mine of quotations on Asia's case against the Catholic Church and Western Protestantism by In Sri Aurobindo, R. Siraj ud Din, Toyohiko Kagawa, Tang Liang Li, Bhai Manilal C. Parakh, Keshub Chandra Sen, Sadhu Sundar Singh, Rabindranath Tagore, John Wu and others. Ohm concludes that "we may indeed live to see a transformation of Christianity in Asia and in the world in general." As with the Reformation movement, the encounter with Asia may serve as an occasion for genuine reforms in the Church. Theology may develop with the aid of Oriental systems; Indian methods of meditation and Japanese color symbolism may become influential.

Is Christianity "permitted" to entertain such thoughts of synthesis? Nobody has forgotten the Catholic rites controversy in 17th-century China. In an excellent survey of views from the Church Fathers to Karl Thieme (Romanitas and Catholicity are one), to Florowsky and O. Casel (Greek culture and the Church are one), to Daniélou and K. Rahner (the Church is open), Joseph Ratzinger answers with a strong affirmative. (Cf. "Theologia Perennis? Über Zeitmässigkeit und Zeitlosigkeit in der Theologie," WORT UND WAHRHEIT, March, 1960). A detailed proof of this view can be found in the most recent volume of the series *Wort und Antwort: Begegnung der Religionen* (Salzburg, O. Müller) by Matthias Vereno, *Menschheitsüberlieferung und Heilsgeschichte* (Zur Verständigung der geistigen Begegnung zwischen Asien und dem Abendland, 1960, 211 pp.). Profes-

sor at Salzburg's Institute of the History of Religion, he surveys Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, Mohammedanism and Judaism in masterful brevity and clarity. He is keenly aware that the Church, in order to fulfill its role in time, must be open towards the great cultures of the world. The progressive realization of Divine Revelation within Israel and subsequently European Christendom, together with the Western secularization of the entire world, have

been preparing for the "new freedom" of a world-wide Christianity.

In our revolutionary times of transition there exist many possible solutions between total war and ultimate peace. The mechanics of these solutions are political ones. A Christian witness based on intercultural understanding can contribute, however, to those political constructs which advance mankind on the road to peace and human unity.

ERNST F. WINTER

## THROUGH OUR FAULT, THROUGH OUR FAULT...

*The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, by William L. Shirer (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960).

*The Last of the Just*, by André Schwarz-Bart (New York: Atheneum, 1960).

There are many among us who, for political reasons, advocate repressing all memory of Nazism—NATO depends on West Germany; without von Braun our missile program would lag even farther behind. Therefore, it is heartening to see William Shirer's angry description of Hitler's Germany at the head of the best-seller lists. Shirer is by vocation a journalist, not an historian, and *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* is journalism at its best: the recital of events moves with authority, seldom interrupted by challenging intellectual analysis, quick with the movement of *réalité*. There is little chance that the reader will emerge from Shirer's book with a grasp of Nazism's meaning (or, better, anti-meaning), but he will have at his disposal facts with which to work out his own position. And, most important, he will have re-experienced the terror central to Hitler's world and will have known at least a hint of the pleasures that came to those who created the terror directly and indirectly.

Shirer has been criticized for his lack of objectivity, but should not a failure

to detest Nazism be regarded as abnormal? And, if Shirer's anger is often directed against the German people, which some say is unfair, we can ask where Nazism found its soil: the seed was not sown on barren ground. In fact, perhaps the greatest weakness of *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* is the fact that its author is a good man who cannot see the Nazis and their works except at too great a psychic distance; they hold up no mirror, however bent, to his soul. Nazism evokes from Shirer no subjective response.

Yet it is precisely a subjective admission of shared guilt that is demanded of us, if Nazism is, ironically, to cure our inherited ill, anti-Semitism. Take, for example, "The Week of the Broken Glass" in November 1938. On November 7, Herschel Grynszpan, a German Jewish refugee, shot the third secretary of the German embassy in Paris. In reprisal, the Nazi government organized the first government-sponsored pogrom. Shirer describes the reaction in Germany:

Individually . . . many Germans were as horrified by the November 9 inferno as were Americans and Englishmen and other foreigners. But neither the leaders of the Christian churches nor the generals nor any

other representatives of the "good" Germany spoke out at once in open protest. They bowed to what General von Fritsch called "the inevitable," or "Germany's destiny."

*Individually* is the key word, and it applies not only to Germany but to the rest of the world. The pogrom—a social policy—awakened individual disgust but little or no protest from the political societies and religious communities of the world. When they failed to respond, a significant part of each of us—no matter what our isolated position—also failed.

But the collective assumption was this: that anti-Semitism was, though deplorable, a natural phenomenon, an act of God. Acts of God are the province of religions and insurance companies. Governments exercised the conscience of the insurance company when, for example, they turned away Jewish refugees who lacked visas from, of all people, the Nazis whom they were fleeing. Religious Jews also considered anti-Semitism an act of God. Therein lies the guilt of Christians.

Let me begin discussion of *The Last of the Just* at its end. Read carefully:

And praised. *Auschwitz*. Be. *Maidanek*. The Lord. *Treblinka*. And praised. *Buchenwald*. Be. *Mauthausen*. The Lord. *Belzec*. And praised. *Sobibor*. Be. *Chelmno*. The Lord. *Ponary*. And praised. *Theresienstadt*. Be. *Warsaw*. The Lord. *Vilna*. And praised. *Starzysko*. Be. *Bergen-Belsen*. The Lord. *Janow*. And praised. *Dora*. Be. *Neuengamme*. The Lord. *Pustkow*. And praised. . . .

The Jewish tradition of the thirty-six Lamed-Vov forms the core of Schwarz-Bart's novel. These are the men on whom, according to the legend, God's continuance of the world depends. Unknown to one another, "the Lamed-Vov are the hearts of the world multiplied, and into them, as into one receptacle, pour all our griefs." Indeed,

most pitiable of all, they may be unknown to themselves: "'When an unknown Just rises to Heaven,' a Hasidic story goes, 'he is so frozen that God must warm him for a thousand years between His fingers before his soul can open itself to Paradise.'" The Lamed-Vov are the *anawim*—the poor—par excellence. What they render to God is sufficient to retain for us all the first of His gifts—existence.

God grants to the Levys that their family shall include one of the thirty-six Just. It happens in 1185:

On that day Bishop William of Nordhouse pronounced a great sermon, and to cries of "God's will be done!" the mob moiled through the church square; within minutes, Jewish souls were accounting for their crimes to that God who had called them to him through the voice of his bishop.

The Jews of York are besieged by those whom the sermon had inspired:

On the morning of the seventh day Rabbi Yom Tov Levy gathered the besieged on the watchtower. "Brothers," he said to them, "God gave us life. Let us return it to him ourselves by our own hands. . . .

And Rabbi Yom Tov Levy slits the throats of 250 faithful Jews in an agony "unbearable to God," and to him is given that his family, whose son, Solomon Levy, survives, shall always be marked by its including one of the Just. Each of the Levy Just returns to God the life God has given.

The Christians make sure that such a return is thorough. Solomon Levy is cast into the very flames that consume the Talmud. . . . Israel dies of shame three weeks after being humiliated by the Count of Toulouse. . . . Mattathias, of whom "it is not even known whether he sang in his agonies," dies on "the immense white slab of the *quemadero* in Seville." . . . And so reads the chron-

icle of the Levys—this novel is, I believe, the greatest in chronicle form—until we find ourselves in the presence of Ernie, the Levy counted among the Jewish Just during our time. And he will be the last.

The family now lives in Stillenstadt, and are closer than ever in their history to assimilation. They live at outward peace with their neighbors. And then, Hitler. During "the year 1933 after the coming of Jesus, the beautiful herald of impossible love," the passage to synagogue becomes for Ernie an exercise in terror as into the young child's memory is burned the refrain:

Jews, Jews, matzo eaters,  
Tomorrow come the knives,  
Next day the stake and fagots  
And afterward—hear this well—  
You'll all be sent to Hell.

One Sabbath the community is attacked by Nazis as they leave the synagogue. After an old woman is struck to the ground the boy begins keening—a "frail bleat of horror." The Nazis laugh at the thin child: "Look at the defender of the Jews!" They are, for once, right, not because this is what the boy chooses, but because it is thrust upon him when the world of Stillenstadt Christians embraces hate. Ernie becomes the friend of Ilse Bruckner, and gives her his childish love. One day he kisses her on the cheek. Members of the Hitler Youth see him do it and attack him. They beat Ernie and abuse him. The girl merely stares. As a result of the injuries the boy spends two years in bed. He recovers in time for "The Week of Broken Glass." Six weeks later the Levys flee to France.

And so it goes. Ernie serves briefly in the French army, masquerades as a Gentile for a time and lives in the safety of the Midi, but finally is drawn back to the Jewish remnant in occupied Paris. As a non-Jew Ernie had been a

dog; now he is himself, one of the unknown Just. He meets Golda. They marry. The Nazis take her away. Ernie forces his own arrest. The end comes at Auschwitz.

(Rudolph Hoess, for a time the camp's commander, had been pressured, Shirer says, by his father to become a priest. At Nuremberg he testified that monoxide gas had not been efficient—ultimately Auschwitz was to gas 6,000 victims a day: "I used Zyklon B . . . which we dropped into the death chamber from a small opening. It took from three to fifteen minutes . . . depending on climatic conditions. We knew when the people were dead because their screaming stopped.")

Ernie and Golda, along with hundreds of others, are crammed, naked, into the gas chamber:

And first a stream, then a cascade, an irrepressible, majestic torrent, the poem that through the smoke of fires and above the funeral pyres of history the Jews—who for two thousand years did not bear arms and who never had either missionary empires nor colored slaves—the old love poem that they traced in letters of blood on the earth's hard crust unfurled in the gas chamber, enveloped it. . . . "SHEMA YISRAEL ADONOI ELOHENU ADONOI EH'OTH. . . . Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One. O Lord, by your grace you nourish the living, and by your great pity you resurrect the dead, and you uphold the weak, cure the sick, break the chains of slaves. And faithfully you keep your promises to those who sleep in the dust. Who is like unto you, O merciful Father, and who could be like unto you. . . ?"

"The Just man rises, the Just man goes to bed, and *all is well*." But in Ernie, André Schwarz-Bart sees the last of the Just. His novel laments over these victims. (It is, incidentally, the only novel I know whose central emotion



is the specifically religious emotion of lamentation.)

The Christian, too, must lament, for the Nazi pagans had, most of them, begun life as Christians, and were served courageously by many who remained Christians, indeed considered the service of a Germany ruled by Hitler fulfillment of God's will. Nor was the Nazi anti-Semitism totally foreign to the history acted out by Christians; Auschwitz was, in a sense, the pogrom brought to technological perfection.

When we speak of the Mystical Body of Christ, we speak, too often, as if it were something achieved, something

fully realized in history. We speak, too, as if those who belong to that Body could not, as a community, be involved in sin. In the abstract, those statements are true. But dare we act on the assumption? For anti-Semitism is the ironic rejection of Christ. And divorce of the person from the guilt of society is a subtle form of repression. The guilt remains—and if it remains unacknowledged may spew forth once more in violence born of a hostility we do not yet know. We did these things . . . through our most grievous fault.

WILLIAM BIRMINGHAM

## HISTORIES OF MODERN ITALY

When Croce's *History of Italy from 1870 to 1914* appeared in 1925, it was justly recognized as a continuation and withdrawal, a passing from overt opposition to a detached cultural anti-Fascism. The *History* was the last apologia for the values of a defeated Liberal-Parliamentarian experience, and was to remain so more than anyone could have anticipated. Aware of Croce's difficult position and of his courage, even former opponents such as Salvemini—who had preferred exile to capitulation or precarious co-existence—muted their criticism. Liberals of a different persuasion than Croce, Marxists, some Christian Popolari, and a number of Socialists had not too much more sympathy for some aspects of Risorgimento Liberalism than had the Fascists; nevertheless, for the more restrained among them, this was no time to give additional aid and comfort to the enemy. Croce's work as a consequence, and particularly during Fascism, was considered by intransigent Italians with ambiguous and somewhat troubled deference.

In the ensuing years under Fascism

Croce turned away from more immediate political preoccupations and history. A. Omodeo, his indispensable assistant on the *Critica*, however, continued the master's defense of an ethos of the Risorgimento with a study of Cavour, and after World War II, another historian very close to Croce, F. Chabod, in a study of Italian foreign policy of the new Italian state, brilliantly continued the work of this Liberal school.

With the collapse of Fascism and new political exigencies, the deferential gratitude due to this school was no longer a delicate problem. Reservations now became the basis for new re-evaluations, and the brutally truncated Liberal experience of Gobetti, the insights of Dirsi, the heroic Marxist perseverance of Gramsci, the bitter lessons adduced by Salvemini and Sturzo, were the basic perspectives for new histories, some of which have already made their mark in contemporary Italian historiography.

Denis Mack Smith's *History of Modern Italy (1860-1945)* (University of Michigan, \$6.50) is perhaps the first English study to take all this revisionary

work into account, and is therefore an extremely valuable contribution to cultural understanding. In substance Croce had argued that the Liberalism of the Risorgimento was an "open" movement receptive to all new forces, to moderate and liberal Catholics as well as to undoctinaire Socialists; that it was no defect for Liberalism to contain within itself the most radically differing elements, to base governments on temporary and opposing groups; that jingoistic and anti-Parliamentarian leaders such as Crispi were sporadic and unrepresentative of that Liberal tradition; that Liberal Colonial policies were not instances of irresponsible imperialism; and that Giolitti was a statesman. In this picture, the only elements that gave some inkling of the coming of Fascism, was the acknowledged dangerous tendency to govern the country more and more without the assistance of Parliament, and the growing successes of an irrational nationalistic mystique.

In Denis Mack Smith's study (which has had, incidentally, considerable success in Italy) most of these claims are denied, and the history of Italy viewed, with a good deal of originality, along the lines of Salvemini's thought. The Liberal Party is not considered an "open" movement but—as an old charge had it—a "consorteria," a clique; unification and ensuing prosperity was expensive, favoring the North and actually worsening the plight of the South. The Liberal Party, too, was guilty of a tax policy that bore heavily on the poor, of irresponsible colonial adventures, and of military expenses completely out of proportion with her economic possibilities. It had also done much to further the cult of empire, in order to distract from difficulties at home. What Croce considered a source of strength, the lack of cumbersome fixed principles, was the weakness of Liberalism, for

principles need not be a straitjacket (as Croce implied), but a force against the centerless factions which found nothing but temporary negations to bind them together.

The man most adept at this empirical adjustment, Giolitti, was not a great statesman, and his calculated gamble in conceding universal suffrage was fittingly defeated by those groups, Catholic and Socialist, which he had planned to manipulate as he had previously done with others. To Giolitti, as well as the Popolari and the Socialists, falls no small part of the responsibility of the triumph of Fascism.

The reconstruction, up to this point, by and large persuasive, is splendid traditional history. Historical objectivity independent of moral judgment is happily not considered the absolute ideal.

The section on Fascism is, perhaps by contrast, less fresh. It is all too sadly familiar as yet; but the concluding section on postwar Italy up to 1946, for all its brevity, is one of the best accounts available, an excellent example of sharp first-hand observation.

On the problem of Fascism and its relations with the Popolari, with unpolitical Catholics, clergy and Popes Pius XI and Pius XII, Smith in general depends on one of the great histories of our time, Binchy's *Church and State in Fascist Italy* which went as far as 1939. But a recent work by Richard Webster, *The Cross and the Fasces* (Stanford) deals with this problem in detail, bringing it down to the present. Webster too has utilized the postwar contributions, the new histories of Catholic movements, as well as the work of the dean of the juridical aspects of the problem, A. C. Jemolo. Any doctoral thesis must suffer by contrast with the sprightly forthrightness of Denis Mack Smith's volume, but in spite of

some ritualistic academic comments on the distinction between historical objectivity and a value judgment, this too is the work of a reassuringly scandalized historian; and there is a good deal in the history of official Catholicism, both lay and clerical, to be scandalized about. There is ample documentation in these pages: the story of Father Gemelli, the University of the Sacred Heart, the destruction of the Partito Popolare. The case histories of Montini, and Migliani, for all their tragic differences, are a refreshing contrast, a reminder that even in the recent age of Don Abbondio, there were some Father Christophers about. But they were few, and Webster, mindful of Sturzo's exile, wonders whether a political party professedly built on Catholic moral principles can ever have any autonomy from the Pope and the Hierarchy. It can; and if there is one lesson to be learned from the past, it is not to have a priest, bound by a vow of obedience, directing a political party, not even a priest of the stature of Don Sturzo. De Gasperi, in this connection, showed rather well what an intelligent lay Catholic could do. It was not easy nor did it insure popularity. A consequence of this practical difficulty that Webster is well aware of, and one that troubles a good number of people, is that what happened to the Liberals in the Risorgimento may well happen to the Christian Democrats of today. But without making any concessions to an extreme Right point of view, it might have been well to have emphasized more in these pages the peculiar difficulty involved for the Christian Democrats in dealing with Nenni's Socialists, since collaboration with other and much less influential Socialist groups has long since been operative. Nenni's Socialist Party has maintained a great servility to the let-

ter of Marxist Socialism; Marxist Socialism today is what Moscow decrees it to be: today Nenni may very well declare a rupture with Togliatti—but what if at the next Congress, and it has almost happened, he were unseated and the young radical group impatient to join forces with Togliatti achieves its objective? Collaboration, then, would no longer be simply with the Socialists. This problem is only one of many which this incisive thesis will force upon its readers.

Since it is not the purpose of Smith or Webster to dwell at any length on literature, and when notice is taken it is usually for political or vaguely cultural interest, the reader may want, out of curiosity, to consult C. H. Whitfield's *A Short History of Italian Literature* (Penguin). Although Whitfield's tone is patronizing and his urbanity frequently tiresome, his general views of Pascoli, D'Annunzio, Carducci and Oriani are solid examples of British common sense. It is therefore surprising to catch him repeating antiquated nonsense about the "rosy-tinted" world of Manzoni and making smugly insular remarks on the political value of Mazzini's notions of the duties of man; anti-Fascism does not demand so much. Some readers, too, will be distressed to find that he takes Pirandello's brilliant exploitation of half-truths for profound insights. But if the reader will put aside the sections on the Risorgimento and the nineteenth century, he will find some unusually provoking comments on Petrarch, Machiavelli and Ariosto. At one point in particular, however, Whitfield's academic flippancy painfully over-extends itself . . . in some remarks on Dante. But then who can resist the temptation to make at least one flippant comment on such renowned travel literature?

SERGE HUGHES

## THE POLITICAL-CULTURAL SCENE

## 1.

*On the Classical Tradition* (University of Michigan Press, 1960: \$6.50), edited by Professor R. H. Super of the University of Michigan, is the first volume of a projected complete and much-needed edition of Matthew Arnold's prose writings. The first volume includes Arnold's earliest and some of his most important prose, covering all the writings from the early Preface to the poems (1853) to *On Translating Homer* (1863). Future volumes—the edition is expected to require ten volumes in all—will present the later writings in chronological order. Only the letters and Arnold's technical education reports are excluded. Each volume, like the present one, will contain an index.

Fortunately, in addition to supplying an authoritative text, Professor Super has provided critical and explanatory notes. Some of these will suggest new areas of exploration for students of Arnold, particularly in the matter of Arnold's use of his private readings in either buttressing his own arguments or setting up targets for his urbane mockery. The edition as a whole, it may be hoped, will promote fresh study of Arnold as a critic, for in this role Arnold remains one of the most instructive and enjoyable of English prose writers.

W. A. MADDEN

## 2.

In *Overpopulation: A Catholic View* (New York: Paulist Press, 1960; 96 p. \$.75 paperbound), the Very Reverend Monsignor George A. Kelly tries to show how the Catholic Church "faces the problem of overpopulation . . . neither the first nor the worst social problem to confront human society." As might

be expected, where the neo-Malthusian envisions an emergency whose consequences will be disaster unless population growth rates plummet, Monsignor Kelly embraces with enthusiasm every solution to overpopulation other than limitation of births, to which he somewhat reluctantly concedes the status of partial answer, providing the means do not conflict with natural law. His final chapter outlines an excellent "Program for Christians": 1. creative productivity to increase food production; 2. education to build economically useful citizens in underdeveloped countries and to inculcate the principles of healthful diet; 3. industrial development to eradicate inequality among nations; 4. migration to achieve population balance; 5. delayed marriage; 6. family limitation through the rhythm method.

Monsignor Kelly's intellectual caution is reflected in his response to two of his citations. He quotes from Pius XII (*Address to the Directors of the Associations for Large Families of Rome and Italy*, January 20, 1958): "Who can be sure that the natural rhythm of procreation will be the same in the future as it is now? Is it not possible that some law moderating the rhythm of expansion from within, will come into play? Providence has reserved the future destiny of the world to itself." Instead of looking at the startling evolutionary implications of the statement, Monsignor Kelly follows with standard demographic analysis of shifts in growth rate caused by aging of populations. Later, he quotes from John R. Connery, S. J. ("Notes on Moral Theology," *Theological Studies*, December 1958): "Scholastic theologians, for instance, maintained that the duty to procreate was incumbent on everyone immediately after the Fall and until such time as the population of the world was sufficiently

provided for. After that it became a common obligation and no longer bound the individual. The individual would then be free to marry or not to marry. Pius XII defined the obligation more precisely in his talk to Italian midwives where he stated that it fell on married couples who made use of the marriage right, but again he related the obligation to population needs. It should follow from a) this that as population needs change one could expect the duty to procreate to adjust accordingly." This opinion was shared, Monsignor Kelly notes, by participants in the 1959 meeting of the Catholic Theological Society. But he can conclude only with a warning: "Upon this point, however, Rome has not spoken."

WILLIAM BIRMINGHAM

### 3.

*Cities in Crisis* (Sheed and Ward, \$3.50). Dennis Clark justifies his essay with the observation that "the outlines of Catholic approaches to the new cultural conditions of urbanism . . . have yet to be synthesized for the sincere inquirer." His studied conviction is that the actual reconstruction of society in the pattern of the Redemption must take place within the existing basic organisms: the city and the local community.

Thus the specific subject of Clark's approach to his synthesis is the parish and the diocese. One could quarrel with his use of Colin Clark as an authority on the optimum size of cities, for instance; or Christopher Dawson as an authority on the effectiveness of lay apostolic movements in contemporary America; the particular judgments which constitute his synthesis, however, deserve considerable attention.

The response, in his view, of American Catholic apostolic movements has been one of fits and starts, unintegrated

and largely undirected; brilliant in spots, but responding more to specific and isolated social problems rather than to the total pattern of challenge which the Revolutionary City throws up. Moreover, the dynamic spirit of the new apostolate has failed to penetrate to any great degree to the core of the technical elite which controls the destiny of its society. Finally, American parishes, rooted in an exclusive immigrant tradition and still preoccupied with problems of plant and administration, have failed to yield the specific fruits of liturgical practice and pastoral guidance.

The typical urban pastor seems unwilling to admit that the social role of the Church extends beyond self-defense: "Frequently the attitude of the Catholic body social and the formal Catholic institutional network in its relation to city affairs is one of blandly independent self-concern and self-development, with occasional fits of agitated obstructionism."

Clark emphasizes that the loyalty of the technical elite is critical to any organization of the new urban society around the fact of the Redemption, and recommends the establishment of study centers staffed by experts, and supported by Catholic universities, the hierarchy, and branches of the lay apostolate. This is a great need, and one to which Catholic intellectuals could well give agitated concern.

MICHAEL E. SCHILTZ

### 4.

*New Publications* DEVELOPPEMENT ET CIVILISATIONS, 29, Place du Saint-Honoré, Paris 1, is a quarterly review published by the IRFED (International Training and Research Center for Development), starting its publication with the Spring issue 1960, subscription is 12 NF (\$2.50). Its second issue explores the problem of hunger; carries



a chronicle of development in the world; L. J. Lebre, "A Word of Warning Concerning Technical Assistance." Of special note is Dennis Goulet, "Inquiétude américaine," pp. 65-82, concerning the psychological and sociological unrest in the United States.

*Antaios*, Zeitschrift für eine freie Welt, Stuttgart, Ernst Klett Verlag, editors Mircea Eliade and Ernst Jünger, first issue May, 1959, every two months, DM 26. In an age of space propositions *Antaios* plans to stress man's bondage to mother earth, and explain the meaning of symbols, myths and poetry. Among the contributors are Roger Caillois, J. Daniélou, M. Keyserling, Julien Marias, Raffaele Pettazzoni, E. Rosenstock-Huussy, D. de Rougement, J. de Vries, H. Wilhelm.

E. F. W.

5.

*Dreams and Neuroses*. A comprehensive and practical contribution to oneirology ("the science of dreams") from the Catholic point of view is provided in *The Secret of Dreams*, by Pedro Meseguer, S.J. (Newman, \$4.75). It was awarded the Spanish Psychological Society's Pilar Sangro Prize in 1957. A glance at the chapter heads will serve to indicate its scope: I. Dreams in History; II. Dreams in Science; III. Dreams and the Schools of Depth Psychology; IV. Telepathic, Prophetic and Mystic Dreams; V. Dreams and Spiritual Direction. The author realizes that "this question of dreams is a particularly thorny one, wide open to discredit not only because the term, dream, is generally synonymous with 'nonsense,' or, at least, 'unimportant curiosity,' 'bagatelle' or 'childishness,' but also because when one tries to take it seriously one is faced with memories of the abuses of occultists, magicians, diviners and astrologers, and no less, though in an-

other direction, of Freudian psychoanalysts." Not everyone will agree with the author that Jung is more significant for Catholics than Freud in the matter of dream interpretation. Not a few will be surprised, not to say upset, by his suggestion that dream interpretation be utilized in the course of spiritual direction. A clear treatise on the psychology, morality and spirituality of dreams, the book also contains informative asides on such topics as sleep, telepathy and depth psychology.

It is interesting that, at a time like the present, when the traditional philosophical course in rational psychology is being belittled in certain quarters, a practicing psychiatrist should find the thomistic treatment of man's sensitive and intellectual faculties, both cognitive and appetitive, extremely useful, in theory and in practice, for psychiatric therapy. In *The Neurosis in the Light of Rational Psychology*, Dr A. A. A. 'tErruwe, a Dutch woman psychiatrist, presents a new, controversial approach to the theory and therapy of neurosis. Utilizing St. Thomas's doctrine on the concupiscible and irascible appetites, which she calls respectively the pleasure and the utility appetite, she explains unconscious conflicts and the phenomenon of repression without reference to what some would consider the more "mythological" features of Freudian psychoanalysis. Case histories of individuals with whom the author claims to have had success with her new type of therapy are also included.

The book offers a clear exposition of thomistic faculty psychology, explains the origin and nature of different types of neurosis, elaborates the author's approach, which combines Freudian insights and rational psychology, and discusses the problem of freedom and responsibility in the light of psychiatric findings. Ultimate judgment on a book

of this kind should come from psychiatrists, who will give it sympathetic but critical attention. Anyone, however, who

is interested in the relations between philosophy and psychiatry will find the book stimulating and suggestive.

## THE IDEA OF REFORM IN THE AGE OF THE FATHERS

Despite much current interest in such prominent Patristic themes as the return of Eden or the transformation of man in the image of God, no one as yet had attempted to deal *in recto* with the vast complex of Christian renewal ideas implied in, and best expressed by, the notion of reform. Professor Gerhart B. Ladner's timely study (*The Idea of Reform, Its Impact on Christian Thought and Action in the Age of the Fathers*, Harvard University Press, 1959), which sets forth the results of some ten years of reflection and research, fills this lacuna and it does so in a singularly thorough and competent manner. The first part of the book distinguishes the idea of reform from the cosmological, vitalistic, and millennarian renewal ideas prevalent in the ancient world, as well as from the related concepts of conversion, baptismal regeneration, and penances, which are presupposed to it but contain it only in germ. The way is thus cleared for a definition of the notion of reform, which, as Prof. Ladner understands it, is "the free, intentional and ever perfectible, multiple, prolonged and ever repeated efforts by man to assert and augment values pre-existent in the spiritual-material compound of the world (p. 35)." Part II begins with a survey of the pre-Christian, biblical, and patristic terminology of renovation and reform and goes on to discuss the various expressions of that idea in the Letters of St. Paul, in whom the early Christian renewal ideology is all but entirely rooted. There follows a detailed analysis of the reform ideas of the Greek Fathers in some of their most distinctive aspects: the return to Para-

dise, the recovery of man's likeness to God, and the theme of the Kingdom of God—three forces which, in the author's happy phrase, "molded the sacral culture of the Byzantine world (p. 82)." Ladner then proceeds to examine the reformatory elements in the works of the Latin writers, in the liturgical texts, and in Canon Law. His investigation reveals, among other things, that Western thought is characterized from Tertullian forward by its emphasis on the idea of a renewal for the better (*renovatio in melius*), over and above the mere return to paradisiac innocence, by its profound and equally fruitful doctrine of the felicitous fault—the famous *felix culpa* of the liturgy—formulated explicitly for the first time by St. Ambrose, by its courageous and epochal efforts to dissociate the notion of the Kingdom of God from that of the earthly Basileia of Constantine and his followers, and, during the later period, by its marked preference for the theme of the *Civitas Dei* or Heavenly City, with its strong social and communal connotations, as opposed to that of the kingly rule favored by the Greek tradition. Part III deals appropriately with monasticism as a vehicle for reform and with the presence of reform elements in the ideal pursued by monks, priests, and pious laymen known to the ancient world as *conversi*.

These brief remarks, one hastens to add, hardly do justice to a book which moves with ease and clarity through an extraordinary variety of intricate and sometimes controversial problems such as Augustine's notion of time, his concept of the two cities, the reform ideas

inherent in his educational program, the pre-eminence of the priestly office over that of the lay ruler, the notion of the soul as the mirror of God, the monastization of the clergy in the West, the relation of innovation to tradition implied in Pope Stephen I's celebrated formula, *Nihil innovandum nisi quod traditum est*, and a host of other theologically and historically relevant doctrines around which large segments of patristic thought gravitate. Oppositions and subtle shades of meaning are indicated but never forced or distorted. Thus Prof. Ladner is careful to observe that the idea of renewal for the better is not totally foreign to Greek thought or, for that matter, that the deification theology of the Greeks is not altogether absent from the works of the Latin writers. What is even rarer among historians, he is fully aware of the philosophical implications of his method, as Appendices I and II on "The Definition of an Idea" and "Metahistorical Conceptions" clearly demonstrate.

The theme that Prof. Ladner has chosen to explore is not only coeval with Christianity, it lies at its very heart. The life of the soul, as the Church Fathers saw it, is not a state but a dynamic situation characterized by unceasing progress, indeed, not just an *extasis* or going out of oneself but an *expectasis* or perpetual going beyond oneself in the direction of an ever more perfect God-likeness. Such is the view which St. Paul advances in an often quoted passage of *Phil.* 3:12-14, and which Gregory of Nyssa expressed in a nutshell when he suggested that "to find God is to seek Him endlessly." Reform in this sense, Prof. Ladner reminds us, is above all personal and individual reform. The concept of Church reform with which it is so inextricably bound up in the modern mind is alien to Christian antiquity and does not

make its appearance until the time of Gregory VII. It is not surprising, nevertheless, that in their efforts to promote a restoration within the precincts of the Faith, the mediaeval reformers should have drawn extensively upon the vast repertory of personal renewal ideas found in the works of the Fathers. It is not surprising either that the same ideas should already have played a prominent part in the rise of monasticism, which first comes into sight in the second half of the third century and at the beginning of the fourth century as a reaction against, and a compensation for, the dangers besetting a now officially recognized and increasingly worldly Christianity. Prof. Ladner's treatment of the leading truths and of the various facets of the monastic life is admirable, as usual. Oddly enough, however, his book contains but few allusions to the first great monastic document of the ancient world, Athanasius' *Life of St. Anthony*, which is entirely governed by the notion of progressive reform, and which remained to the last one of its most dramatic illustrations.

Prof. Ladner rightly insists that the ideal embodied in the concept of reform possesses a specifically Christian flavor and owes little or nothing to pagan thought. This is not to deny that the Christian writers were influenced in various ways by contemporary philosophy. Prof. Ladner himself detects certain terminological resemblances between Basil or Gregory of Nyssa, for example, and Plotinus. It may be interesting to note that in his treatise *On Virginity*, 12, Gregory has, in fact, not only stolen a few words or phrases from Plotinus but practically lifted a whole section out of *Enneads* I, 6, 5. Yet just how Christian a Christian remains even when he plagiarizes a pagan may be seen by comparing the two passages in question. Like Plotinus

and in the very same terms, Gregory describes at length the purification of the soul and its ascent toward God. But whereas the pagan philosopher had asserted that "this attempt to win back his grace must be man's business," Gregory will proclaim that it is most emphatically "not man's business but the great gift of God." It would be difficult to state more concisely and more effectively the vast distance that continues to separate the two ideals even when they appear to be most closely related to each other.

There can be little doubt that reform in the Ladnerian acceptance, although adumbrated in the Old Testament, is properly a Neo-Testamentary and more especially Pauline notion. For that reason the author may be justified in restricting the investigation of its sources to the New Testament writers. Having gained this much, the present reviewer cannot help feeling that he would have added a new depth to his study by examining most systematically not only the typological or prophetic aspects of the Old Testament but certain key notions such as that of "return," with all its highly original implications. It is significant that there is no Hebrew word for progress in the Old Testament. The ideal preached by the prophets is defined almost invariably by the notion of restoration or return, as in Amos 4:8-11, Isaiah 1:24 ff, and Jeremiah 30:20. The last of the three prophets just mentioned may not have hit upon the idea of reform in its strictest sense when, anticipating a

state in which the youngest and most recent would coincide with the oldest and the best, he predicted nostalgically that the children of Israel would be as aforetime; but he came quite close to it, and certainly paved the way for its definitive formulation in New Testament times.

Experience has shown more than once that it is perilous to deal with a whole period through the instrumentality of a single category, however broad and comprehensive that category may be. Prof. Ladner makes no such claim for the idea of reform. Yet it could very well be that he has found in that idea a kind of Archimedean point with which to lift the world of patristic thought. His solidly structured, superbly documented, and delicately balanced synthesis has all the earmarks of a great book. Although barely off the press, it has already won a place among the classics in its field.

ERNEST L. FORTIN

*Reviewers.* In addition to those by the editors, reviews in this issue were contributed by: Ernst F. Winter, Head of Department of Political Science, Iona College, New Rochelle, N. Y.; Harvey Cox, Visiting Lecturer in Theology, Andover-Newton Theological School, Cambridge, Mass.; William Madden, English Department, Indiana University; Michael Schlitz, History Department, Loyola University of Chicago; and Fr. Ernest L. Fortin, A.A., Theology Department, Assumption College, Worcester, Mass.

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